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## IN THIS ISSUE

WITH reports of New Delhi still fresh in our minds, we are fortunate to be able to publish, "The Missionary Movement in The World Council of Churches," an address delivered by John Coventry Smith at the annual meeting of the Western Section of the World Presbyterian Alliance in Atlantic City, New Jersey, January 16-18, 1962. Dr. Smith is General Secretary of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church.

"The Position of Hebrew Language in Theological Education," by James Barr, appeared first as an article in *The International Review of Missions*, October, 1961, and is reprinted here with their permission. Professor Barr, recently of New College, Edinburgh, is William Henry Green Professor of Old Testament Literature at Princeton.

A paper, "The Christ-Life as Mythic and Psychic Symbol," read by Hugh T. Kerr at the monthly meeting of the Faculty Seminar, is published with the kind permission of the author. Dr. Kerr is the Benjamin B. Warfield Professor of Systematic Theology at the Seminary and editor of *Theology Today*.

"Towards Understanding the Thought of Paul Tillich" is a digest of the leading ideas of a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Theology by David H. Hopper. Dr. Hopper is now a member of the Faculty at Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota. "Existential Preaching" is a paper written for a graduate course in Homiletics by John Killinger. Dr. Killinger, who is a member of the English Department at Georgetown College, Kentucky, is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Theology in Homiletics and Liturgics at Princeton.

By request we print a sermon, "What Does It Mean to Believe in God?" by John Hick, Stuart Professor of Christian Philosophy. Dr. Hick delivered his sermon in the Second Presbyterian Church, Princeton. Dr. John Bishop, who is visiting Lecturer in Homiletics and a minister in Jersey City, New Jersey, gave the sermon, "Our Duty of Praise," before the student body of the Westminster Choir College.

Two papers, under the general title "Protestant Clergymen and American Destiny," which complement each other, were given by Drs. James H. and John E. Smylie at the annual meeting of the American Church History Society in Washington, D.C., December 28-29, 1961.

The bibliographical listing of Faculty publications in 1961 was prepared by the Rev. Dale Bussis of the Department of Speech.

D. M.

# THE MISSIONARY MOVEMENT IN THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

JOHN COVENTRY SMITH

THERE were two actions taken by the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi, both of which were anticipated and both of which in anticipation and in retrospect stand out as extremely significant actions for the future. I refer to the action admitting the Orthodox Churches of the USSR and the action which made the International Missionary Council the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council.

It depends upon perspective as to which of these actions is considered the most important. From my perspective, the integration of IMC into WCC has been long anticipated and looms up now as extremely important. From the standpoint of others, and certainly from the standpoint of the newspapers, the coming of the Churches of Russia into the World Council has tremendous significance. Kyle Haselden, writing in *The Christian Century* of January 10, 1962, solves the problem for himself by combining these two and calling the result "the Event of the World Council of Churches," which he describes as "the massive merger of the World Council with the great bulk of those Orthodox and Protestant bodies which still remain separate from it and the enlargement of the World Council in scope and function through the integration of the International Missionary Council." This he describes further by

saying, "This colossal consolidation of Christian forces at New Delhi was itself an achievement worthy of comparison with the great moments in the history of the Church."

I think I would agree with him in that both the broadening and the deepening of the World Council were together significant. But my theme this evening has to do with the deepening of the purpose of the World Council of Churches as it brings into itself the modern missionary movement. In my opinion, the importance of this deepening of purpose is enhanced by the fact that at the same time the Orthodox Churches were admitted.

By the time the action on integration was taken in New Delhi on Sunday afternoon, November 19th, it seemed routine and insignificant. Some said it was like the merging of two separate bureaucracies into one; there was no suspense, no debate, no drama. But this event had been prepared for over the long years, and the significant drama had been so long anticipated that no great suspense could be attached to the action. Let's begin by looking at the preparation.

Edinburgh in 1910 was not the first of the great missionary conferences. It was one in a stream of international missionary conferences held approximately every ten years beginning in the last century. But Edinburgh was the beginning of the ecumenical movement.

as we know it today, because by 1910 the missionary societies had involved the Churches related to them in their consultation; and thus from Edinburgh there came not just the continuation of missionary conferences, but two other streams in the life of the Churches: Faith and Order, Life and Work. In 1933, when these two movements first explored the possibilities of the formation of a World Council of Churches, it was decided after full deliberation that the International Missionary Council, which had also grown out of Edinburgh, would not become a part of the world organization. This was confirmed at the 1938 Madras Conference of the IMC.

There doubtless were good and sufficient reasons advanced at the time for this decision, but many knew that eventually the missionary movement must find expression in the WCC and that an affirmative decision might be delayed but was finally inevitable. Actually, it took twenty years, from 1938 to 1958. In the meantime, the World Council began to find other avenues of expressing something of its missionary conviction. And it was only in the nick of time that the IMC's Assembly in Ghana made the decision, in principle, to join with the WCC. There the representatives of Asia joined with those of the United States to overcome the objections of the missionary societies of Europe who saw this as a contradiction of the basic division between Church organizations and mission organizations which exists, up to the present, on both the continent and in England.

The last assembly of the IMC was held in New Delhi on November 17-18,

1962. By that time, the plan had been formulated, and every council had had an opportunity to vote upon it. One, the Christian Council in the Congo had withdrawn; and one, the missionary council in Norway was alone in opposition. All the rest had approved either by action or by silence.

For me, that last assembly was a momentous occasion. The IMC had seemed to be the culmination of the hopes of the modern missionary organization in past years, and for some its passing could not help but be viewed with reluctance. Bishop Bengt Sundkler, a Swedish Lutheran from Africa, set the tone for us, however, in the final paper of the session when he reviewed the dreams and accomplishments of the past and faced the future with hope. His concluding words were, "Except a seed fall into the ground and die. . . ." And so on Sunday afternoon, the first day of the New Delhi Assembly, without suspense and without drama, the Assembly passed the final action, and the IMC became the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC.

Actually and disappointingly, this lack of drama continued throughout the Third Assembly, insofar as the Division of World Mission and Evangelism was concerned. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, the General Secretary of the IMC and now the Director of the Division, made an extremely significant and stirring speech as he brought the Assembly face to face with its responsibilities in the field of Mission in the new organization. But that also was on the first day, and nothing after that quite measured up to the expectation that had been set by the speech. Per-

haps I should modify that and speak only for myself. Nothing after that quite measured up to *my* expectations. I remember the night in Evanston when Dr. Charles Leber, my predecessor, and I walked out of an evening meeting and commented to one another that the WCC at Evanston was missing a tremendous challenge, that these 150 Churches from more than 50 countries ought to be saying together that they now had a responsibility for the presentation of the Gospel to all peoples and to the end of the earth. Thus, I came to New Delhi with the hope that somewhere this could be said in a manner that all would understand, that there would be a renewal of the Churches in their commitment to the Mission of the Church. But this did not occur at New Delhi. Perhaps it was too soon to expect that that which would have to grow out of association together would come simply by the Assembly action. But I believe that this expectation is still a real one and that it can come in these years that lie immediately ahead of us if God's purpose is to be worked out in the new organization.

Let me now speak about three ways in which I think there was a groundwork laid for the missionary movement in the WCC.

First of all, integration is now an accomplished fact. It came with some delay, and when it came some of its significance had been lost on the way. But nevertheless, the thing is done. There is a Division of World Mission and Evangelism. For this we give thanks. Certainly if this had been delayed beyond New Delhi until the Fourth Assembly, it might never have

occurred, for by that time the World Council would have found other ways to express its missionary concern, possibly through the Division of Inter-Church Aid, and the IMC might well have begun to wither on the vine. Asia and Africa would have chosen the World Council rather than IMC, if faced with a continued choice. But the heritage of the Missionary Council has been preserved. It has its chance now within the World Council to find new life and new relevance for our time.

In the second place, integration for the most part is real. This is not simply the bringing of the IMC as a recognizable unit into the structure of the WCC. I must admit that at times there are some who would regard it as such. But the majority of the leadership in the World Council are concerned that the missionary emphasis shall have a chance to have its effect upon the whole operation of WCC, its representation upon the Central Committee both from missionary societies and from the younger Churches, in participation on other major committees of the WCC not closely related to the DWME, and in emphasis in the staff. This makes clear that the leadership expects that the new Division will make its contribution to the whole of the work at Geneva. In this respect, the coming of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin first as General Secretary of the IMC and now as Associate General Secretary of the WCC, is significant.

In the third place, the theme that was chosen for New Delhi gave an opportunity for this emphasis on Mission within the life of the World Council to be highlighted at every point. "Jesus Christ the Light of the World" may

seem to be a prosaic theme in the USA. But when 1,600 Christians meet in New Delhi in a country where only 10 million out of 420 million people are Christians, then one cannot say, "Jesus Christ, *the light of the world*" without facing at least part of the significance in that statement. There were times when the deliberations in sections and committees seemed to depart considerably from the theme, but for the most part the context of what we were saying and doing was still this claim for the uniqueness of the Gospel.

But in spite of all this, the real challenge remains. Will this basis that has been laid, will this structure that has been so carefully planned for, furnish the opportunity for the deepening of purpose as we all work together? Will the best of the missionary movement be preserved and enlarged and made central and relevant in the new WCC? I believe that as we face this challenge we must also look at some of the problems. There are obstacles in the way before this can be accomplished. Some of these obstacles are in the missionary movement itself.

## I

First, there is a heritage in the missionary movement that leads people to hang back when challenged actually to participate together in administration. The IMC was the first of the groups to form an organization, in 1921 at Lake Mohonk. Its constitution has all the checks in it to prevent action. For too long IMC has been committed to the past and therefore faces action as a unit with hesitancy. This reluctance was evidenced in the last meeting of the Administrative Committee in St.

Andrews in the summer of 1960. It was proposed seriously that the budget of the new Division should remain the same as the budget that had been decided upon in Ghana in 1958 and that there should be no change until possibly 1964, when the Commission of the new Division would meet. Fortunately, this recommendation was defeated.

It was followed by another recommendation, that the central office of the IMC, which had been in London, should remain there and that the director of the Division would be able to fly to Geneva whenever he was needed for a meeting. This also was defeated.

This same kind of approach was evident in the first meeting of the Commission at New Delhi on December 6-7. There was reluctance to claim the services of new people in the World Council within the DWME. We tended to be the same old faces doing the same old things. Before the end of the meeting, there began to be an understanding that we were something different, and I have confidence that in the new World Council its leadership will not permit one of its Divisions to continue to be something that it was before it became part of the WCC.

This organizational reluctance, this built-in hesitancy, was expressed at times in the work of the committees and sections that were related particularly to the work of the new Division at New Delhi. Perhaps the framework of the sections was not prepared to produce material that would be challenging. I know that in the section where I served, the section on Service, we were divided into four sub-sections, and each of the sub-sections was supposed to produce 1,500 words of the final re-

port. We had a secretary and two advisers and three members of a drafting committee, and after full discussion and three or four drafts participated in by different people, what we produced as part of the report on Service was very inadequate indeed. In the same way, the committee on the program of the new DWME was handicapped. Bishop Newbigin's address set the pace for the discussions, but that which they produced bears little resemblance to the challenge which he presented.

Perhaps we were unconsciously trying to satisfy those missionary representatives who had approved integration at Ghana and then at St. Andrew's but with some reluctance. Perhaps we were assuring them that there really wasn't much difference even after the final event had occurred. Later, I introduced an amendment. I am not sure that I said anything more than was said in the document, but at least it brought me a certain amount of satisfaction, and the amendment was approved by the Assembly. It was inserted as the first paragraph of Section II where the program of the new Division is described. It reads as follows:

The program of the new Division is not here finally described. It will provide a new frontier, a new dimension to the World Council. We have made a general outline of its task. We cannot know or define all its deeper meanings or the extent of its activities. Only the experience of living and working together can teach us these. Our temptation will be to think of the Division simply as a continuation of the interests of the International Missionary Council,

with emphasis on Asia, Africa, and South America. We must resist this temptation. This is the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. We are concerned not with three continents but with six. In cooperation with every department of the World Council, and with the full resources of the Christian community in every land, we would help the Churches to confront men and women with the claims of Jesus Christ wherever they live. We now prepare to venture forth. We pray that we shall be sensitive to the leading of God's spirit as He begins to use the structure that has been created.

## II

But, in addition to the obstacles that are present in the missionary movement, there are also obstacles in the WCC. First of all, there is the obstacle in the present confusion in the Churches as to the nature of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. This was evident at New Delhi. There were a considerable number of statements that could be quoted as supporting this uniqueness, such as the statement in the message, where Jesus Christ is singled out as the one way to the Father, the way on which we meet every man. But there were also statements that supported a different approach to the nature of Christ and to the so-called non-Christian religions. There were one or two statements that could well be interpreted as being almost syncretistic in nature, though these came from the platform and not from the consideration of committees with Assembly approval.

Dr. McCord has described the situa-

ion as being one of "theological co-existence." And lest you assume that this is particularly applicable to the WCC, let me quickly ask you whether this is not true of the average congregation in our own country. How many of them could say that they believed that Jesus Christ is *the* light of the world, that God's revelation in him is unique, and that no other religious leader before him or since has ever been in the same category? And if they should say yes to this, the next question would be: Do you believe in a whole-some evangelistic approach to the Jews in your community? There is no question in my mind but that our confusion and our lack of clarity at this point is symbolic of the life of the Churches in our time, and if the missionary movement that is now within the WCC is to represent these Churches in mission and evangelism, it must speak from a base that understands the meaning and uniqueness of the Gospel.

### III

But aside from the theological problems, there is also the very complex and difficult relationship to the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugees, and World Service, formerly the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees. This has been an administrative puzzle as long as the IMC and DICASR existed as separate autonomous bodies, and the administrative problem has not been solved by making them two parallel divisions in the WCC. They will be together, they will have daily contact, and Christian men and women can work out the problems, but nevertheless the problems are there.

Without going into the details and at

the risk of oversimplifying the problem, let me say that perhaps one of the basic reasons for this problem lies in our inability to agree upon a definition of the two words, mission and evangelism. Here in the United States we have long supposed that we knew what the difference was. Mission includes both evangelism and service. Evangelism is the activity of the Church in leading people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior, and service in hospital and school and in society is that which grows out of our Christian love. It is the other side of evangelism and no less part of mission. Thus, administratively most of our mission agencies include activities in evangelism, in education, in medical work, in relief and rehabilitation.

But in Europe, mission and evangelism tend to be regarded as identical, and service is something other than mission. The Dutch missionaries in Indonesia, for example, were evangelists. And only evangelists were missionaries. Teachers and administrators and doctors were not missionaries. Mission and missionaries and evangelism and evangelists were identical.

Thus, in the United States activities which are for service are done through mission agencies, while in Europe service activities have found expression through the Division of Inter-Church Aid.

There is no question in my mind, however, but that these obstacles in the missionary movement and in the WCC will be overcome. In fact, I believe that God has led us thus far, that he will lead us in our new relationship, and that he has many new opportunities in store for us as we move forward together.

The Division of Studies, for example, is now undertaking as a major project in these first years after integration the study of what it is that makes Jesus Christ unique for the peoples of the whole world. The fact that this is done not in missionary circles or as support for a particular part of the Church, but is being done by the World Council of Churches itself, means that it will be done competently and adequately and that when complete it will be a challenge to all the Churches.

I personally believe that there can be no clear line of distinction between World Mission and Evangelism and Inter-Church Aid and that we may finally come to a joint Department of Action, this action to be described as Inter-Church Aid for Mission and Service. This Department will release those gifts that are given through mission and relief in the United States and those gifts that are given through mission and service in Europe for those strategic projects which we need to support together.

Here in the United States, there may be another major change that will involve more of us than are now related to agencies of Mission. This cannot be done today, though certainly it ought to be done tomorrow. The DWME as now constituted is related to the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of Churches. But certainly by definition a Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC has just as much claim upon the Department of Evangelism and the Division of Home Missions of the NCC as it has upon the DFM. Perhaps in no other way can the significance of what

has happened be brought home to the Church in the United States than to make the Division of Home Missions and the boards of home missions and national missions of our Churches conscious of their equally vital relation to the DWME in Geneva. By such an emphasis, we may finally understand in America that the Mission of the Church is one for all peoples—pagans in Europe and North America, as well as in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Frankly, until we in North America come to understand that we are part of the whole body of Christ and are thus helped to look at our task here from the perspective of the total world Christian community, God will not be able to give us an adequate message for our own people.

#### IV

At this point, let me add one other thought, which in phraseology, at least, I owe to Eugene C. Blake. Such increased action at the ecumenical level may finally enable Protestants everywhere to get an image of the Church which is more than national. The Roman Catholics are ahead of us on this. Somehow their Church is not considered to be an Italian Church; it is the Church of Christ. At present, Protestants are handicapped here and abroad, for we have no practical image of the Church other than that of national bodies.

I believe also that what Kyle Haselden calls the massing of Protestant and Orthodox Churches that occurred at New Delhi offers a tremendous opportunity to the DWME. There are those who say that this bringing of the Orthodox Church into WCC offers the

greatest threat to the DWME. Those who point to this theory point to the Orthodox Churches as those who have been the least interested in Mission. In fact, most of them for one thousand years have not had any interest in missions and in recent years have labelled the missionary organizations "proselyters" and "sheep stealers."

My facing of this fact as an opportunity and not as a threat stems back to a meeting we held at Stony Point two years ago when we talked about our approach to people of the Muslim faith and inevitably were drawn to discuss the place of the Orthodox Church in evangelism among Muslims. Dr. Lowrie Anderson, himself a missionary and the son of missionary parents in the Middle East, related how in the early days the missionaries had had some desire to work through the Orthodox Churches, but that their patience with what they regarded as superstition and ignorance had worn out. Dr. Anderson then stated that we were now called to be patient, not for one year or two years, but for fifty years.

Actually, I do not think it will take that long. Since the end of World War II, the Mar Thoma Church in India has sent 100 missionaries outside the bounds of its own Church circle. A missionary society has been organized in Athens under the Greek Orthodox Church. The Syrian Orthodox Church in South India has recently given many evidences of its interest in missionary outreach. Father Makary at the Coptic Theological Institute in Cairo is greatly concerned that his Church shall reach into Africa in missionary endeavor. The Abuna Theophi-

lus, representing the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, one of the largest in that area and one which has 145,000 priests, said to us at New Delhi in all sincerity that he hoped through some interdenominational approach his Church could be helped in the training of missionaries.

This will not happen tomorrow, and you and I in the Protestant Church will have to learn much more than we now know about the Orthodox Church before we can contribute constructively. And on the way we will learn much of what that great communion has to give to us and to the world. But I believe that God is leading us to study together and ultimately to activity together and that the release of the 5% of the world's population that is Orthodox, combined with the 8% that is Protestant, will greatly strengthen the missionary outreach of the Church.

I am convinced that God has been at work in the world preparing the kind of world community in which we now live and that He has also been at work in the world through the missionary movement, preparing the kind of world Christian community that now finds part of its expression in the WCC. In our kind of world, God can best speak to us about his message for all peoples as we listen to what he has to say to us together. Perhaps the most impressive thing for me at New Delhi was how, within the context of our association together, old and familiar things took on new meaning. The fact that Communion Services were held, of various kinds it is true, but nevertheless the giving of the broken body and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, came to us again and again within the context of

our fellowship. The fact that even *TIME* magazine could pick up as the most significant Scripture passage Colossians 1:15-20, which states that Jesus is both the first principle and the upholding principle of the whole scheme of creation and that now he is the head of the body which is composed of all Christian people and through Him God chose to reconcile everything on earth and everything in heaven by virtue of the sacrifice of the Cross. Even the old and familiar hymns took on a new significance. One cannot stand with representatives of almost 200 Churches from all over the world and sing some of these hymns without having a new experience, a new understanding, and a new commitment. Let me read one for you:

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run;  
His Kingdom stretch from shore to  
shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no  
more.

## V

Let me add now two points. I will not call them appendices, for they are more closely related to that with which we have been dealing. The first is a problem which should be very much the concern of the World Presbyterian Alliance. May I state it in this fashion? Among the leaders of the Churches in Asia and increasingly in Africa, there is an expression of antipathy to confessional organizations. Dr. D. T. Niles of Ceylon, the General Secretary of the EACC, is the spokesman for this group, but he is by no means alone. His phrase, "We want the seed and not a potted plant" is quoted in other coun-

tries by many leaders of Churches. In preparation for the enlarged meeting of the Continuation Committee of the EACC which was held in Bangalore from November 7-12, papers were prepared by Tina Franz from Indonesia, Hendrick Kraemer of Holland, Dr. Devanandan from India, Kathleen Bliss from England, and others. These papers, almost without exception, dealt with the confessional organizations in very strong terms.

At Bangalore, a special committee was called together and after several days prepared a statement that was adopted by the EACC. It is called "The World Confessional Development and the Younger Churches." It gives a history of the confessional development. It says that the ecumenical movement has brought stimulus and that "world confessional ties may be vitally useful to enable the Church to serve within the ecumenical movement and without allowing the demands of a nation to dominate its life." But the statement also says there is fear and anxiety. "The very vitality of these confessional loyalties often creates serious obstacles in the life of the younger Churches. However good the intention, it seems that the expression of world confessionalism in increasing complex institutional structures results in paternalism and continued exercise of control. Moreover, world confessional organizations stand for rivalries in Christianity. In a world confessional organization, the younger Churches remain almost permanently weaker partners. It is this present intention in the world confessional development which interferes in Church unity and which is a matter of serious concern."

Then the statement recommends that a consultation be planned by the EACC sometime in 1962 or 1963 on the issues raised by confessional development and to this consultation representatives of younger Churches and of the confessional organizations be invited.

If we are to understand this movement in the younger Churches, we must first of all understand that it is very real. Moreover, it has reason behind it. All too often movements toward co-operation and unity among the younger Churches have been held up or defeated because certain of the younger Churches had to get the consent or would not or could not resist the pressure of their confessional organizations. I think I do not need to give illustrations of this.

We must not smugly say that this does not apply to us. Nor must we become defensive. By doing so, we may strengthen the tendencies which are in ourselves to make confessionalism something for the younger Churches to fear. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, for example, this past year tried to get the United Church of Northern India to consult with the World Presbyterian Alliance before it made final decision concerning the proposed union of the Church in Northern India. The United Church of Northern India refused to make the request.

By becoming defensive we also make it impossible to participate constructively as Presbyterians in the problems that Churches in Asia and Africa and Latin America face. We have a contribution to make. Our record is clear. Our declaration of intention is a sound one. With our Presbyterian heritage, we have experience on almost every

continent in union efforts and out of that experience can share insights with Churches that face these problems afresh. Regionalism left alone can separate itself from this heritage and tradition and make mistakes. Concern with unity of the Christian witness within a nation may blind younger Churches to a sound approach to problems of faith and polity. Such unions may actually end up being less ecumenical than the Churches that participated in the union.

I, therefore, would strongly recommend that the World Presbyterian Alliance be prepared to participate in these conferences in Asia and in any other such conferences on a constructive basis. Anything less than this is to abandon our experience and our Presbyterian heritage.

The second question that I wish to discuss briefly deals with our own denomination and its program in facing some of the questions that we have raised this evening. Three years ago, the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations invited fifteen men and women to study its program and to advise it concerning the future. Three of these people were from the Commission, two were missionaries of the Commission in Brazil and in the Middle East, and ten were from Churches around the world. The Chairman was Dr. C. H. Hwang of Formosa, the Principal of Taiwan Theological College. Actually, the critical question that they faced is the critical question for all Churches today whether they be in Europe and North America, or in Africa, Asia, or Latin America. It is this: Is the Church as it is constituted today competent to engage in its share of the

world mission? Are we in the United States, for example, prepared in the new relationship to give of our substance and of our young people now that we give to something that is not just the extension of ourselves and over which we exercise no control? And secondly, are the so-called younger Churches, which after all are so much modeled after the Churches in Europe and North America, now competent to undertake their share in the total world mission? Actually, the committee was seeking to answer the question as to what God wants the Christian Church to be and to do in our time.

The committee had three meetings, one in the United States two years ago this month, one in Ethiopia in February and March of last year, and one in Evanston, Illinois in August and September. They have made their report to the Commission, and we are sharing it with our related Churches.

It is not my intention to share with you the details of the Report. Any of you who wish may have copies to read. But in brief it seeks to state a theology of mission in simple terms, speaking of the Church, especially the younger Churches, as the first fruits which are the promise of the future. Then it speaks of the necessity of the Christian in all of the circles of his activity being active as part of the Church, as the Body of Christ in the world. And it speaks of what many of us believe is its most vital theme, "that God gives to each group of believers the gift of the Spirit which, if recognized and trained and used, will enable that group to bear a faithful witness in its own situation." Let me say this again. "God gives to each group of believers those

gifts of the Spirit which, if recognized and trained and used, will enable this Christian community to bear a faithful witness in its own situation."

Then the Report undertakes to speak of the implications of this fact for (1) the ministry of the Church. Do we always need to have ordained ministers for leadership? Do we wait until someone has graduated from a Seminary before the Church is a church? (2) It speaks of administration and the fact that every church, local and national and on a world level, must be permitted to have the kind of administration which is fitted to its gifts and its needs. (3) It speaks of the use of funds which when given from the outside may smother the gifts of the Spirit that are present in the Church, but if used properly can extend the witness of the gifts which the Church already has. (4) It speaks of institutions which may be a burden on the Church that is not prepared to undertake their support or their administration, but may also be expressions of the gifts of the Spirit that God has given the Church. (5) It speaks of the use of missionaries as extensions of the vital life of the Church on the growing edge of the witnessing community. And it speaks of the need to find new ways by which the Church must face the new situation of our time.

In the next two years, we are seeking to follow up this Advisory Study Committee Report both in relationship to the Commission, the Church in the U.S.A., and then with each of our related Churches around the world. In every instance we are seeking to do it in co-operation with those denominations with which we are closely related.

We hope to end with conclusions which we have arrived at together concerning the program which is now being undertaken and which should be planned for the future.

D. T. Niles, who is planning the study conferences which will use this document, among others, in Asia, has stated it this way: "We want Churches in Asia and related mission agencies to look together at (1) frontiers we must hold against attack, (2) growing edges of the Church which we must strength-

en, (3) things we are doing which should be got rid of, and (4) new things we should be doing.

Our experience in talking with Churches in Asia and here in the United States would indicate that this study is part of a movement in many Churches which seeks the kind of structure and relationship which will enable the Church to renew its inner life and to prepare to be an adequate and faithful witness to what God is saying to us in our time.

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Jeremiah's period is indeed an era of culminating tragedy. What the prophet of Anathoth sought to avert had come to pass. He knew that the foundations had been shaken in judgment, but he saw nevertheless that unfathomed depths of divine mercy still remained. The Covenant people, in very deed, had spurned and had rejected the Covenant-keeping God. They were now suffering in exile from their homeland. But, true to himself, God would be faithful to his people. He was now offering to make their future destiny even more glorious than he had promised. He was coming to them with better promises by establishing for them a new Covenant. In the end, the prophet of Judah's doom had become a herald of the everlasting gospel.

—Howard Tillman Kuist, in *Jeremiah—Lamentations*,  
(The Layman's Bible Commentary), John Knox Press,  
Richmond, Va., 1960, p. 11.

# THE POSITION OF HEBREW LANGUAGE IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

JAMES BARR

THE original occasion of this article was the publication by the British and Foreign Bible Society of its new edition of the Hebrew Bible. It was then suggested to the writer that the occasion might be marked by some general survey of the place taken by Hebrew language teaching, and work on the Hebrew text of the Bible, in present-day theological education. The situation from which the writer's experience is drawn is primarily that in the Church of Scotland, which requires the study of Hebrew language by all candidates for the ministry, except where special reasons, such as entry to the course at a later age, apply. In fact most students do two years of Hebrew study in all, in which they pass from the first beginnings to the reading of classical poetical texts such as *Deutero-Isaiah* or the *Psalms*. This is the typical position, though a small proportion of students, who specialize in Old Testament, do much more work on the Hebrew text, while another proportion, who are exempt for special reasons, do none at all.

The first point about the traditional Hebrew course is that it is clearly a reading course, and its implicit design and purpose is to achieve a reasonable level of reading fluency in the Hebrew Biblical text. The brevity of the course, in marked contrast with the practice of normal linguistic education, causes a concentration on reading ability as

against (for example) the ability to translate into Hebrew. Grammatical training was designed and geared for the needs of reading within the Biblical text and could enter only to a very small extent into questions not immediately important for the reading of it. The basic assumption is that much greater precision and understanding can be obtained by reading the literature in the original language.

It is not the intention of this article to question the validity of this policy; indeed, it may emerge that in the circumstances it will remain the correct one. The ultimate argument in its favour is probably that from the academic nature of theological study. Can adequate standards be maintained in Biblical study where the original languages are not known? The example of philosophy can be urged in favour of an affirmative answer, perhaps, for it is normal for Plato and Kant to be studied, even at an advanced level, by students who have no Greek or German. But philosophy is perhaps a special case, and literary studies are different; we would not think highly of a study of French literature undertaken with no knowledge of the French language. It can, then, be argued that the nature of Biblical study as an academic literary discipline necessarily requires a knowledge of Hebrew. Moreover, as many teachers would argue, experience with students who have had

no language training at all demonstrates the difficulty of maintaining academic standards in theology where the Biblical languages are regarded as optional. In comparison even with students who have gained little real mastery of Hebrew, those who have never attempted it at all may display a seriously second-hand quality in thought on the Biblical material and a dismal dependence on translations.

In addition we have to remember the importance for theology of such matters as textual criticism, which is much more prominent than in philosophy or in most modern literature, because of both the obscurity of some Old Testament passages and the importance of the theological questions which may depend on textual minutiae. Even if the present linguistic teaching is hardly enough to enable students to judge such points for themselves, without it they could hardly appreciate the scope of such problems at all, or the way in which solutions may be worked out.

We must now face some of the difficulties. Though the traditional course is designed for the attainment of a reading knowledge in the Biblical text, it cannot be said that it has succeeded in providing this within the trained ministry. It is notorious that the number of ministers within the Church of Scotland who can read a page of Hebrew, or who can control from their own knowledge a statement made about the Hebrew language, is extremely small. This is true not only of those who have had great difficulty with Hebrew as students, but also of those who have in fact done quite well in it; and it is also true of a great majority of

professional theologians outside the Biblical field.

This fact cannot be counted in itself as a proof that the compulsory requirement of Hebrew is a mistake. It may be reasonably held that the acquisition of Hebrew is essential for the integrity of a theological education as an academic discipline, even if it is to be forgotten soon afterwards; just as, for example, we teach Latin to many thousands of children who will never read a book in Latin or form an independent judgment upon a Latin text. Thus an ability to understand the problems of textual criticism, and a certain independence of translations in Biblical study, may be attitudes which remain after the Hebrew itself has been lost.

Nevertheless we cannot discount the significance of the widespread ignorance of Hebrew in the parish ministry, for it has a powerful retarding effect upon students, who find it hard to apply themselves to study in a language which, if the experience of others is a criterion, they will forget in another year or so. For another thing, there is an important difference from Greek at this point. All those who argue in theory that Greek is a much harder language than Hebrew must face the fact that the actual retention of an ability to use some Greek in the ministry is very much higher than the retention of Hebrew. And finally, the widespread loss of ability to read a Hebrew text is a powerful factor in the popularizing of quite another way of looking at the place of Hebrew in theological education.

For this other approach, which has entirely altered the face of the matter, we may begin from the contrast be-

tween 'Hebrew thought' and 'Greek thought,' a contrast which has come to have enormous importance in modern theology. We need not here discuss the validity of this contrast; it is widely accepted and much of what is now being said about the Bible depends on it. 'Hebrew thought' is supposed to permeate not only the Old Testament but also the New, and it is supposed that an essential element in New Testament interpretation is the recognition of the 'Hebraic content' in its Greek words. The exploration of this is explicitly a main purpose of the great Kittel dictionary. There is some variety in the degree to which Greek thought is held to be harmful and dangerous; but in many circles a considerable, or an absolute, priority is given to 'Hebrew thought'; it is supposed to be the foundation of Christianity, while Greek thought is either antithetical or furnishes only peripheral elements. It thus becomes extremely important for theology to be able to identify 'Hebrew thought' and to state its characteristics.

This affects the study of Hebrew because it is widely believed that that language 'reflects' Hebrew thought, and that a correlation can be made between features of the language and features of the thought; thus the 'dynamic' Hebrew thought is correlated with the 'dynamic' features of the language, and so on. A well-known full-scale attempt to depict Hebrew thought on this basis is Thorlief Boman's *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*. Although his assessment of Greek thought is individual and unusual in many ways, his basic method, that of working out a picture of Hebrew thought by correlation with features

of the language system, is widely accepted. Dr. Bultmann, for example<sup>1</sup>, who questions Boman's treatment of many details in respects in which the present writer has also questioned them, appears to accept as valid the basic idea of the approach.

The validity of this approach, however, is not our subject here, and its importance for our purpose is that it has rather changed the ground on which arguments for the necessity of Hebrew language study have been based. The classic argument was, presumably, that Hebrew was needed primarily in order to be able to read the Biblical text with more accuracy; the new argument is, rather, that Hebrew is essential if we are to enter into the basic thought-forms of the Bible. Thus it can be argued, and has been argued, that important theological points like the relation of divine love to divine righteousness are practically unintelligible or inexpressible except on the basis of the Hebrew language, and that the layout of the Hebrew language expresses or reflects accurately this relation as it exists in reality. Thus we reach the position that Hebrew language study is dogmatically necessary, because without it we should be cut off from the 'Hebrew mind.'

This tendency is reinforced from another side. In some of the more Biblically-based currents of dogmatics it is now common for dogmaticians to undertake a good deal of detailed exegesis (Professor Karl Barth is a good example). In this exegetical material in-

<sup>1</sup> See *Gnomon* xxvii. (1955), pp. 551-8, and especially p. 552. I did not know Bultmann's review until the argument of my *Semantics* was complete.

creasing attention is being given to phenomena of Hebrew language, and some significant dogmatic conclusions are supposedly based on them. It should be noticed that the phenomena used in this kind of exegesis are usually lexical; they are arguments from the spread of meaning of a word, or from the difference between two words which are related on different occasions to a similar object, or from the non-use of a certain word. Very seldom are they syntactical. The reason for the prominence of the lexical element is, firstly, the enormous influence in modern theology of lexical studies such as the Kittel dictionary and secondly, the fact that lexical phenomena often appear to be in a form in which material can usefully be fed into dogmatics—consider for example the wide use made of the famous Eros-Agape contrast. Numerous examples of the use of lexical material in the building up of theological positions have been given by the writer in his *The Semantics of Biblical Language* and his *Biblical Words for Time*.

The existence of these general methods in identifying Hebrew thought and in solving dogmatic problems has thus led to a new and strongly expressed insistence on the necessity of Hebrew language. This, however, has not settled the position of Hebrew, but has only created new problems for it.

The traditional Hebrew course, with its learning of the basic grammar and its painstaking reading of texts, coupled with detailed problems of text, exegesis and translation, has never given students an equipment by which they can handle the assertions which arise from the modern correlation of Hebrew

thought and Hebrew language. How many students are in a position to handle critically the alleged factual details, the generalizations about Hebrew, or the assumptions about linguistic method which appear throughout Thorlief Boman's work? How many of them have received training in procedures by which they can determine the truth of assertions that Hebrew is dominated by the verb to a unique degree, or that the construct state must represent a peculiar way of seeing the relations between objects? Assertions of this kind raise problems which belong to general linguistics and have never had systematic treatment, and only haphazard mention, if any, within the traditional Hebrew course. Thus if the purpose of a Hebrew course is to provide some degree of critical judgment in handling Biblical linguistic data, and if this newer emphasis on Hebrew as the necessary gateway to Hebrew thought, and thus to theological truth, is to continue, then it is justified to claim that this emphasis demands that there should be an education in Hebrew; but the education in Hebrew that it demands is not the education in Hebrew which in fact we have.

An ability to read a text of *Isaiah* is not necessarily needed in order to formulate, or perhaps to criticize, the assertion that Hebrew is dominated by the verb, or that the Hebrew words for 'truth' and 'faith' both have a 'fundamental sense' of 'firmness,' or that the word for 'assembly,' *qahal*, comes from the same root as *qol* 'voice' and thus shows that the community was summoned by the divine voice. What true facts there are in such as-

sections can be, and are, drawn straight from the reference books and neither depend upon, nor will be substantiated by, any amount of actual reading of Hebrew texts; all that they demand is an ability to use the Hebrew script, because the dictionaries use it. Dr. A. R. McAllaster, who has stated with the utmost energy the position that the Hebrew language structure corresponds to the patterns of Hebrew thought, himself sees that an actual mastery of Hebrew is not necessary for the grasping of the insights involved and even seems to hold that the possession of excessive detail may cloud the perception of them.<sup>1</sup> Again, for the use of lexical information in dogmatics we begin to hear not that the dogmatician must be able to 'read' Hebrew, but that he must be able to 'use' it—which is only a recognition that many lexical arguments do not depend on a reading ability at all.

It is in fact possible to obtain a fairly good idea of the structure of a language and of the range of some significant lexical items without learning that language, just as it is possible and indeed normal to know and use a language while possessing only the vaguest notions of its structure. Thus if the kind of assertion which we have been discussing, correlating Hebrew language and thought, or relating the theological realities to the Hebrew lexical stock, is valid, it would be possible to consider a Hebrew course which did not teach the actual reading of texts, or taught it only up to a very low level, but which presented those elements of linguistic structure which were significant for

Hebrew thought, along with lexical studies of the more important theological words. Many teachers may have considered some such idea as a substitute or as a supplement to the traditional course.

This alternative, however, is not so easily open to us, for its presuppositions, namely the validity of correlations of thought structure and language structure, or of the layout of the Hebrew lexical stock with theological reality, are either unsound or uncertain. To say this is not to assert that *all* such statements must be invalid; it is sufficient to point to the extremely erratic, and often quite fantastic, character of statements which have in fact been made by enthusiasts for this point of view. Dr. McAllaster himself not only asserts that the retention of reduced vowels in Hebrew is 'parallel' to the shadowy continuance of the soul after death and to the maintenance of a dead man's name through the levirate marriage, but maintains that the existence of gender distinctions in the Hebrew verb can be connected with the general separation of the sexes 'seen in rules about clothing, worship, and the general attitude toward women.' The presence of many such assertions, alongside of useful information, in the short compass of Dr. McAllaster's article is only the accumulation in a small space of what has been gradually building up in the modern theological assessment of Hebrew.

A course designed to examine Hebrew linguistic structure cannot therefore take this assessment for granted; the most it can do is to examine and test it. Thus, though a course in Hebrew structure, rather than in the read-

<sup>1</sup> 'Hebrew Language and Israelite Faith,' *Interpretation* xiv (1960), 421-32.

ing of texts, may be itself valuable, and may fit well with present tendencies of interpretation, it can be undertaken usefully only in the awareness that it may in the end disprove the correlation of Hebrew language and Hebrew thought, although the belief in this correlation is at present one of the main reasons now being advanced in favour of compulsory instruction in Hebrew.

Similar judgments must apply to the use of lexical data in dogmatic questions. Again, we need not argue that the use of such data in dogmatic arguments has *always* been wrong; it is enough to point out that it has *often* been wrong. The argument that the existence of such interpretations justifies and requires compulsory Hebrew is likely to rebound disastrously on those who offer it. The modern dogmatic use of lexical material, far from being a demonstration of the value of language study, often presupposes and evidences the relative failure of our Hebrew study, both by the fact of its construction in the first place and by the wide acceptance which such procedures seem to gain in the Church. We have seen how often the arguments are lexical, often including strong etymological elements; they work from the Hebrew word for this or that and do not depend upon the syntactic collocations which much more require a living knowledge of the language for their understanding. In many theological interpretations which use lexical data, the essential ingredients are significantly just those elements of Hebrew which normally remain as the final residue in the minds of our ministers, after actual ability to read Hebrew has disappeared—the memory of some of the principal

words, an ability to use the script for reference purposes, some fascination for etymology and a sense of some great peculiarity in Hebrew which may conceal some great treasures of thought. Conversely, success in our basic and traditional Hebrew course, producing an actual reading proficiency, and applying this strictly to the reading of the texts and to the study of the words only within their linguistic contextual collocations, could only work for the destruction of this type of interpretation.

The question now is what to do next. There is, first of all, the possibility that the arguments which depend on the correlation of Hebrew language and thought may be so discredited by criticism that they can in future be ignored, so that we could proceed with the traditional course while warning students against any easy lapse into the correlations now popular. It is more probable, however, that these arguments will require more continued consideration and examination, even if only because they have become so frequent. But they cannot be dealt with simply by our continuing to acquire a reading knowledge of Hebrew. It would be necessary to work out systematic methods for the description of linguistic phenomena and for the consideration, if necessary, of their correlation with Hebrew thought. But this would mean an integration of Hebrew study with general linguistics—a change for which we are far from prepared. But one thing can be basically stated: any such approach must aim at a total description of the language, in integration with descriptive methods applied to other languages, and must not allow itself to be shifted

from this path by the occasional phenomenon which appears to be theologically interesting or attractive.

Thus theological arguments which in fact exist may force upon us the entry into such a study; but we should not enter upon it with extravagant expectations about the riches of Hebrew thought which it will finally unlock for us. We must enter upon it with the sober intention of finding the facts and finding what can validly be deduced from them; it may silence more theological interpretations than it stimulates. It should give us greater accuracy, and help us to avoid mistakes which have been made; but, unlike many recent procedures, it can promise no quick dividends for theology.

This may seem too negative. But such a study, while making no specious promises, would provide a solid description of Hebrew phenomena within its limits, and would bring out any truth in the now popular correlations much better than the haphazard guesswork which we now have. It could, moreover, provide some real, if limited, grasp of the linguistic facts for those who cannot really learn to read the language. Moreover, the positive side for theology lies elsewhere, in the classical discipline in which the student learns to know the language and works with it upon the detail of the texts, carefully taking up at each point the particular difficulties of textual criticism, grammar, dating and so on. Theology must be built not upon the layout of the Hebrew language, but upon the things which the Israelites said in that language. The damage done by the recent correlation of thought and language is that, while insisting emphati-

cally on the need to study Hebrew, it has greatly exaggerated the simplicity with which scraps of fact about Hebrew can be transmuted into profound visions of the inner thought of the Israelites, and has thus painted in far too glowing colours the dividends which the elementary course in Hebrew, typical of most theological education, will pay. Linguistic fact is complex, contingent and haphazard; its detail and complexity have to be mastered painfully, and it is quite specious to relate them simply to such general structures as constitute the 'Hebrew mind' or the theological reality of something. Interpretations based on such simple facts (if facts they be) as that *qahal* comes from the same root as *qol*, or that Hebrew has no neuter gender, are worlds removed from the kind of thing that constitutes actual exegesis.

Thus the basic positive contribution of Hebrew study lies in actual exegesis of linguistic material within its given contexts. But in this situation the value of Hebrew training depends considerably on the degree of actual mastery of textual and syntactical detail, and of a discrimination which is not only able to appreciate the correct but also to reject the incorrect, that is attained. It must be openly admitted that below a certain degree of such mastery the value of Hebrew for exegesis is limited and ceases to be worth the enormous trouble of acquiring it and of trying to use it on the texts. For students below this grade there is no reason to doubt that their Hebrew is of no use for exegesis, and that if they learn the language it should be simply as basic background knowledge, rather than as a tool that they will actually be able to use. There

is not the slightest reason to doubt that for exegesis such students should work from English.

One of the great problems for theological Hebrew study is to produce an actual linguistic sense among students. Most of them, after all, are primarily interested in theological-philosophical matters. They appreciate that in theory Hebrew can be of great value for them in their use of the Bible. But they are unlikely to have a similar interest in Hebrew for itself, nor will they know the basic mental techniques for the description of linguistic facts. In the placing of intrinsic linguistic interest in a secondary place they are only encouraged by those apologies for Hebrew study which emphasize the theological value of learning Hebrew. But the position has been made worse by the modern correlation of language and thought, for these arguments force the linguistic material into the patterns of a philosophical-theological structure and constitute a subjection of the linguistic to the theological sense; they deaden the sensitivity for Hebrew phenomena which do not fit into this picture and damage the sense for linguistic realities as such. Yet they do not help students with their actual Hebrew study, because in it students in fact meet numerous phenomena which do not fit the supposed correlation, and for which this correlation gives them no explanation and discourages them from looking for one elsewhere.

Thus it is in the interest of theology to foster a linguistic sense for Hebrew that is independent of the current theological evaluations of Hebrew language and culture. But it must be justified because of the simple necessity of know-

ing the facts, and not by apologies which conceal the haphazardness of the facts in relation to theology, and suggest that any truth discovered will fit helpfully into the patterns of theological reality.

One other point should be added—the paramount importance of the Septuagint in the discussion of the Hebrew-Greek contrast in thought and language. In discussions of the background of Hebrew thought behind the New Testament vocabulary, and in the approach made more familiar by the Kittel dictionary and the various word-books, there is more and more reference to the Septuagint, and entirely rightly in principle. But it must be doubted if the theological scene to-day shows sufficient basic competence in the handling of the Septuagint. This is a field with all kinds of difficult problems, for example those of text and of the translation techniques of the various books. Only in a limited number of centres of theological education, it may be suspected, is an adequate training in these matters normally given; and the effect of this on the whole theological scene can be seen in the number of dubious interpretations allegedly based on Septuagintal evidence and in the inadequate capacity of most students to resist or criticize them.<sup>1</sup> The permanent importance of the relation between the Old Testament and the New, and the present prominence of the Greek-Hebrew contrast, probably alike demand a greater attention to the Septuagint.

It may be that a more flexible approach to the study of the language of

<sup>1</sup> For example, see *Semantics*, pp. 137 f., pp. 152-5, pp. 172-5, etc.

the Old Testament would be one that took up three distinct elements, but paid attention to them in different proportions according to the needs and abilities of different students. The first would be the basic learning of Hebrew, leading to an ability to handle the linguistic detail in actual contexts in the Bible. The second would be a discussion of general linguistic problems;

how linguistic phenomena can be described, and what conclusions can be validly based upon them. The third would be an adequate course on how to handle the Septuagint. A mixture of these elements in judicious proportions might answer the needs of theological students, in the context of the questions actually being handled to-day, fairly well.

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In contrast with the present theological scene, the New Testament is notable for the limited and partial character of the criticisms which it made of Greek thought, in contrast with the comprehensive and systematic contrasts offered by modern theology . . . The systematic and comprehensive series of contrasts, with which much modern theology sets biblical thought against Greek thought, is something quite unlike the actual presentation of the Christian message in Hellenistic lands in New Testament times.

—James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, SCM Press, London, 1962, p. 159.

# THE CHRIST-LIFE AS MYTHIC AND PSYCHIC SYMBOL

HUGH T. KERR

**B**IBLICAL and doctrinal apologists for Christianity tend to live and move within a prescribed *theological* circle. It is the purpose of this essay to plead with such apologists to widen their circle by recognizing the significance of *mythological* and *psychological* as well as theological approaches to Christian faith and life. It is *not* the purpose of the essay to advocate the substitution of mythic and psychic symbols for, let us say, the Gospel interpreted as *kerygma*. However else Christianity may and should be interpreted, it can and should *also* be interpreted mythologically and psychologically.

When it is possible and popular for literary critics to speak of "Christ-figures" in contemporary drama and fiction, and when the U.S. Government sponsors Institutes on Religion and Mental Health, Biblical and doctrinal apologists impoverish rather than imperil their witness by ignoring what is going on around them. Exclusivist Christian claims need not be denied in expounding Christianity's share in universal mythic and psychic symbolism. Even the comparative anthropologists, sociologists, and symbolists—who have no stake in the Christian cause—do not dispute the Christian's right to absolutist assertions. To suggest that Christian faith-and-life, whatever its uniqueness, is *also* in—if not of—the world of universal symbolism may conceivably

in our day be better evangelistic strategy than traditional exclusivist apologetics.

To get the matter before us, we will deal with what is here called the "Christ-Life" as: (a) paralleled in the *monomyth* or hero's pilgrimage and ordeal, and (b) internalized and interiorized as psychic history and experience. "Christ-Life" is a *portmanteau* catchall to include: life of Christ, kerygma, religion-of-Jesus, Christ-of-faith, as well as the Christian's life in Christ, Christ-in-us, and Christ-for-us. "Symbol" is used to suggest—as distinct from the contrived "sign"—the multivalence and ambivalence (mystery *and* meaning) of mythic and psychic phenomena.

## I. *The Christ-Life and the Monomyth*

The "Monomyth," a term used by James Joyce and adopted, adapted, and anticipated by many others, is an endlessly variegated structure of fairly constant components. "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."<sup>1</sup>

The pattern of the monomyth is so

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Pantheon, 1949, p. 30 (cf. pp. 245f.).

universal, says Gerald Vann, that it may be taken as a paradigm of created reality. "You find it," he writes, "in nature, in the cycle of day and night, the sun dying and going back to his mother the sea to be reborn the next day at dawn; and in the cycle of the year, high summer followed by the 'fall' of autumn and the death of winter and then the rebirth of spring. You find it in myth and folklore and fairy tale and poetry; you find it in dreams; you find it in the teachings of the mystics, in ascetical theology in the catholic doctrine of purgatory; you find it in the words of Christ when he speaks of the grain of wheat dying or tells Nicodemus that a man must be reborn of water and the Spirit and that if he would find life he must first lose it. Above all, you find it in the life of Christ himself: for the Word was made flesh and came to dwell among us that he might himself live out the pattern, that thenceforth the pattern should no longer be the expression of an unfulfilled yearning but something that men would be able to live out, effectively, in their turn."<sup>2</sup>

At one end of the monomyth, the hero leaves the security and comfort of home and sets out on a perilous journey into the dark unknown which is fraught with danger and death. So too the Word leaves the Eternal home, "being born in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7) in a stable, often represented in art as a dark cave. As the hero stands alone and apart from his fellows, so the Son of Man found no "place" in the Inn and had "nowhere to lay his head" (Luke 2:7; Matt. 8:20). The

early growth of the hero is often marked by an ominous crisis at the adolescent age of twelve or thereabouts. At this time special wisdom and grace that will sustain his later ordeal and encounter with death become manifest. So the *puer aeternus*, naked, free, separated from the mother, meets us as Eros, Dionysus, Adonis, Attis, Tammuz, Tages, Renaissance cherubs and *putti*, and the anonymous youths on the Sistine ceiling.<sup>3</sup> So too Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem separates himself from his mother, and the Rabbis "were amazed at his understanding and his answers" (Luke 2:47).

At the other end of the monomyth, the death struggle of the hero and the rite of the dying god are paralleled by Christ's passion (his "agony" is significantly interior and no gory slaying of a dragon or monster) and his Crucifixion. As the Creed puts it: he "was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell."

The mythic quality of the *central* event in the Christ-Life, namely the cross, has been explored by some interpreters with reference to Freud's Oedipus complex. The mythic domestic conflict between father-son-mother sets the stage on which the drama of life is enacted. For Freud, as for Sophocles, the outcome of the drama is unresolved tragedy compounded of murder, death, unrequited guilt, and self-immolation. In general terms, father and son are bound to each other in affection, yet they are at variance with each other as rivals. In the New Testament, however, the cross of Christ is taken not as

<sup>2</sup> Gerald Vann, *The Paradise Tree*, Sheed and Ward, 1959, pp. 18f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-36. Not to separate from the mother results in neurotic infantilism.

tragedy but as reconciliation. Erich Wellisch has suggested that the Hebrew psychology is more enlightening as a clue to the cross of Christ than Greek tragedy, and that Abraham-and-Isaac is a better mythic precedent than Oedipus.<sup>4</sup> Here tragedy or near-tragedy is averted by the providential intervention of God the Father himself, and the result is not death-all-around but reconciliation, restored fellowship, and renewal of life. The parallels between the Abrahamic episode and the Crucifixion have long been recognized not only by Biblical exegetes but also by artists. But in both instances the father-son relationship is not calculated to indicate the enmity but the love of the father for the son. In spite of some tendencies in traditional theology to put the Father against the Son in such a way as to make the death of Christ a sacrifice to appease the wrath of God, the New Testament interprets the redemptive initiative as coming from God himself. The reconciliation is not between the Father and the Son but between sinful mankind and a just but merciful God.

To describe the cross as "the *central* event in the Christ-Life," as was done at the beginning of the previous paragraph, is to speak not only Biblically-historically-theologically but also symbolically. The cross in the New Testament is called the "tree" (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24), and the parallel between the paradise

tree, which brought sin and death, and the Calvary tree, which brought forgiveness and new life, is coupled in Paul's discourse on the First and Second Adam (1 Cor. 15:20ff.). This is portrayed in art by showing the Crucified's spilt blood trickling down upon Adam's skull at the foot of the cross. The tree is central, however, in another way. It is cruciform—the cross-roads of reality where horizontal and vertical intersect.

The possibilities for this kind of mythological and symbolic exegesis of the Christ-Life are virtually infinite, but enough has been said to indicate how it can and has been done. We may reflect, however, that the whole sequence of the Christ-Life as monomyth is itself commemorated and repeated in the ritual observance of the Christian and liturgical year. "The myth of the eternal return," as Eliade calls this type of temporal and cosmic repetition, has behind it: (a) a once-upon-a-time creative connotation (*in illo tempore, ab origine*, "in the beginning"); (b) creative time comes out of and is preceded by pre-formal chaos (Halloween, New Year's Eve, Shrove Tuesday, Walpurgis Night); (c) compulsive repetitive obsessions (ritual, dance, chant, music, prayer; neurotic behavior is endless repetition of meaningless patterns); (d) either the abolition of time and history (in most primitive, archaic, Eastern cultures) or their regeneration (as in the Judaeo-Christian view of revelation and incarnation in and through history).

Ritual repetition of the Christ-Life is not only a mechanical mnemonic device ("do this in remembrance—*anamnesis*—of me") but a regenerative proc-

<sup>4</sup> *Oedipus and Isaac*, London, 1954. "The Akedah Motif (cf. Gen. 22: 1-19) is the Biblical aspect of the psychology of family relationships. . . It is the author's conviction that studies in Biblical psychology provide a necessary requirement for the development of psychiatry," pp. 113, 116.

ess in which time and history are constantly being re-created out of chaos. "History (as chaos) can be abolished, and consequently renewed, a number of times, before the final *eschaton* is realized. Indeed, the Christian liturgical year is based upon a periodic and real repetition of the Nativity, Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, with all that this mystical drama implies for a Christian; that is, personal and cosmic regeneration through reactualization *in concreto* of the birth, death, and resurrection of the Saviour."<sup>5</sup>

There is, of course, another and a deeper sense in which the Christ-Life is repeated and that is in the experience, faith, and consciousness of the Christian. The Christian is Christ's man, and the Christ-Life reminds us not only of what God has done in Christ but what Christ does for and in us. This aspect of the Christ-Life leads to the second or psychic symbolization of our theme.

## II. *The Christ-Life as Inner Life*

We may indicate by way of transition from the mythic to the psychic category that the Christian Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Eucharist symbolize both the life-death-rebirth pattern of the monomyth and the Christian's participation in the Christ-Life. The mythic symbolization of Baptism reproduces the death-resurrection theme whether applied to the Christ-Life or to the Christian life (cf. Rom. 6:1-11). Mythically associated with water, which Jung regards as the commonest and most universal arche-

type of the unconscious, Baptism reminds us of Christ's descent into the water of the River Jordan and of his subsequent death and resurrection. As these are crucial episodes in the Christ-Life, so are they in the Christian's life-in-Christ (initiation, obedience, ordeal, death, rebirth). Baptism is a *rite de passage*, a ceremonial way of passing from one level of existence to another, from one ontological dimension to another, from childhood to maturity, from death to life. The pre-formal waters of creation, the maternal womb waters, the water of cleansing, the thirst-slaking water, the boundaries divided by water, the teeming mysterious life within the waters, the dangerous engulfing waters (cf. I Pet. 3:18-22)—all these associations and many more can be found without number in Biblical and non-Biblical allusions, myths, and folklore.

Moving from the mythic to the psychic level, Baptism may be read not only as a ritual repetition of the Christ-Life and of the Christian life but also as *inner* life. Speaking of the water of Baptism, Dillistone says: "a descent into the water is normally a symbolic description of a new penetration into those deeper and more mysterious fecundities from which a true creativity can be derived. Other elements are associated with water in this dim realm of the unconscious—the void, darkness, death, silence, loneliness—but water is the symbol which gathers all these associations together in a comprehensive way."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Christianity and Symbolism*, Westminster, 1955, pp. 183ff. Dillistone alludes to Day Lewis' *The Poetic Image* which speaks of "the sea of the unconscious" and approves of Maud Bodkin's interpretation of *The*

<sup>5</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, Harpers, 1959, p. 130.

It may be that for modern man the interiorizing of water symbolism makes more sense and carries more meaning than either its mythic or sacramental celebrations if these are regarded as mainly external or objective. Eliade notes that "modern man no longer has any initiation of the traditional type. . . . Initiatory themes remain alive chiefly in modern man's unconscious."<sup>7</sup> The relation between the cleansing waters and inward illumination is found, by the way, in Jesus' miraculous cure of the blind man who bathed in Siloam's waters ("Lord, I believe," John 9:38). The contemporary obsession with swimming pools, tiled baths, stainless steel kitchens, automatic washers, and synthetic detergents may be de-sacralized symbols of the age-old wistful quest

for cleansing, illumination, and rebirth.

The Lord's Supper or Eucharist may also be interpreted not only as mythic but as psychic symbol. In virtually every Christian tradition, the Sacrament of the Eucharist has been seen as dramatic action, re-presenting the salient events in the Christ-Life by word, prayer, gesture, and ritual. Whatever else happens or is done or is re-enacted through the liturgy, the Sacrament is the Christian equivalent of the monomyth, the ritual repetition of the hero's life-and-death story. This is apparent in all forms of Christian worship, as for example, in the Prayer of Consecration: ". . . Wherefore, having in remembrance His Incarnation and holy life, His Passion and precious death, His Resurrection and glorious Ascension, and His continual intercession, we Thy humble servants, pleading His eternal sacrifice, do set forth, with these Thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto Thee, the memorial Thy Son hath commanded us to make."<sup>8</sup>

The mythic dimension of the Eucharist has been so accented in, for example, the current liturgical revival that the psychic dimension has scarcely been seriously considered. In worship both the central and the corporate character of the Sacrament have been stressed in such a way as to reinforce not only Biblical but mythological notions of festal feeding, covenant interpersonal relations, oblatory sacrifices of grain, animals, first-born sons (Micah 6:7), and even money ("stewardship and promotion"). Not presuming to

*Ancient Mariner* in which she sees "the process by which the spirit withdraws into a state of accidie or one of impotent frustration, a doldrum state, as an initiation into new life, going through a period of introversion before turning outward again with new vigour, descending into hell that it may rise to heaven." Cf. C. G. Jung, *The Integration of Personality*, pp. 66-68; Erich Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*, pp. 154-5, where a patient's dream about crossing a river is interpreted as "an old and universally used symbol of an important decision, of starting a new form of existence—birth or death—of giving up one form of life for another." Part of the eschatological vision is: "And there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1).

<sup>7</sup> *Birth and Rebirth: The Religious Meaning of Initiation in Human Culture*, Harpers, 1958, pp. 132, 134. Elsewhere Eliade has observed that the psychoanalytic process and depth probing "still preserve the initiatory pattern. The patient is asked to descend deeply into himself . . . this dangerous operation resembles initiatory descents into hell, the realm of ghosts, and combats with monsters." *The Sacred and the Profane*, Harcourt, Brace, 1959, p. 208.

<sup>8</sup> *Book of Common Worship*, United Presbyterian Church, p. 162.

psychoanalyze all these kindred ceremonies, it is important nonetheless to ask what psychic urges are at work here and what psychic satisfactions the Eucharist bestows? Remembering the multivalence and even ambivalence of symbols, there is little prospect of discovering a single, simple answer. The main direction of what follows is in line with the monomythic principle of life through death.

Reference has already been made to the Oedipus complex, and it is sufficient here simply to reflect what a breakthrough Freud achieved on the psychic level with this bold if controversial mythic device. Apart from the father-son relationship (which is ambivalent in the sense of involving both antagonism and affection, guilt and reconciliation, death and life), the sacrificial animal (lamb) or food (bread and wine) may ritualistically provide psychic satisfaction as father-substitutes. If, as Freud would maintain, the death-wish or parricide instinct is in civilized society suppressed, it can still find substitute gratification symbolically (spiritual presence) or realistically (transubstantiation) in rituals such as the Eucharist.

A very different psychic interpretation has been developed by Jung who may be said to read sacrificial rites in general and the Eucharist in particular as symbolic actions in which psychic transformation from death to life is achieved. The Eucharist, in other words, would be one mythic way in which the person could come to psychic terms with death. From death to life, or more precisely through death to rebirth, is the colophon of psychic maturity and integrity. Since death-phobia

is as strong as death-wish, sacrificial surrogates provide satisfaction and escape from the tragedy of existence. Hence the major motif of the Eucharist, regardless of exhortations to sing for joy rather than weep for sorrow, is on the passion and death of Christ, one reason why Christian worship seems to many so gloomy, lugubrious, and funereal. The other side of this is the new life, the rebirth, the resurrection promise. As psychic symbol the Christ-Life serves as a model for internalizing the monomyth, and beyond that, the transference between Father and Son as well as between the Christian and Christ is a recurrent and important feature.

As water in Baptism has its psychic aspects, so too does bread-and-wine in the Eucharist. Leaving to one side the mythic forms of "eating the god" (Frazer) as well as the obvious and not so obvious associations with bread-grain and wine-blood, the "signs" or "elements" of the Eucharist involve oral ingestion. On the physiological level to eat and to drink, in other words to take nourishment, is essential for existence and well-being. Psychologically this physical fact is related to the mother-child situation which for the infant is one both of pleasure and dependence. This primal oral experience can be transferred to other levels. For example, eating and drinking *together* in social and religious, ritualistic and informal, ways is a universal practice among all peoples. In the Eucharist much is made of the *corporate* character of the Lord's Supper, and restrictions are laid down so that it not be taken in private or apart from the congregation of the faithful. There are also

social and ethical extensions of the oral experience—"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink" (Matt. 25:35). The meaning of the various kinds of oral experience is the same—participation and union with the "other," symbolized by oral incorporation and identification.

The oral experience is not altogether pleasurable or unitive since the well-being and new life which the intake of food and drink assures first involve the symbolic "killing" of the grain, animal, fruit, grape, etc. To eat meat requires the slaying of animals; to drink wine, grapes must be plucked from the vine and crushed. The toothless infant at its mother's breast is capable of biting, and the threat of swallowing or of being swallowed has psychic as well as physical implications—whether we are talking about lactation, cannibalism, or the Eucharist.

Taken together the two sides of the oral experience once again symbolize in yet another way the principle of life through death. In well-fed countries food symbols may become meaningless, though the threat of non-being, of being swallowed, may still plague the dreams of calorie-conscious man. Wine or alcoholic drink is another matter. Whether fermented fruit of the vine or martini cocktail, the afflatus of mild intoxication is as well known today as ever, perhaps even more so. The negative or death side of drink is of course the desire to eliminate (to swallow!) the past, the superego, the unconscious, the "other" with whom one may be all too much and too often united by force of circumstance (e.g. the boss, secretary, spouse, colleague, etc.).

What has been said of arbitrarily se-

lected aspects of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist is meant only in illustration of how the Christ-Life may be interpreted as psychic symbol. The Sacraments make convenient and appropriate illustrations since they neatly combine theology, mythology, and psychology. But what is known in classical theology as Soteriology, the *ordo salutis*, the life of the Christian who lives *in* Christ because Christ lives *in* him (Gal. 2:20), in other words the appropriation by the Christian of the redemption wrought by Christ—this whole area is also susceptible of psychic analysis.

Of central importance for Christian faith, beyond all doctrine, creed, or code, is personal communion and union between Christ and the Christian. The Christian life is the Christ-Life, and Paul sums it up by saying, "living to me means simply 'Christ.'"<sup>9</sup> As the typical salutation of the Prophet is "Thus saith the Lord," the Pauline signature is "in Christ." For the Apostle this is clearly something other than moral example, *imitatio Christi*, or eschatological promise, though to be "in Christ" may involve all these. In an extended passage (Rom. 6:1-11) which makes reference to Baptism, Paul associates in a vivid way the death and resurrection of Christ to the Christian's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection to newness of life. "We who

<sup>9</sup> Phil. 1:21; cf. "Christ, the secret center of our lives," Col. 3:4; "every day we experience something of the death of the Lord Jesus, so that we may also know the power of the life of Jesus in these bodies of ours," II Cor. 4:10; "the new spiritual principle of life 'in' Christ lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin and death," Rom. 8:2. Phillips translation.

died to sin. . .baptized into his death. . . we were buried. . .as Christ was raised . . .united with him in a resurrection like his. . .our old self was crucified with him. . .we have died with Christ . . .we shall also live with him. . .you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Whether Paul's interiorizing of the "in Christ" phrase was an invention of his own, perhaps not unrelated to his own psychic history, subsequent Christian interpreters have reiterated the interpersonal relation between the Christ-Life and the Christian's life. The medieval mystics aspired toward the *unio mystica* and often described this in marital, sensual, and sexual terms. Even scholastic theologians talked about the "beatific vision," and it is reported that when Thomas Aquinas was granted such an experience toward the close of his life, he forthwith abandoned the completing of the *Summa Theologica*. Luther interpreted Christ's nativity as an event not only in the past but in contemporary experience. Preaching to his congregation about the miserable plight of Mary in the manger, he imagines some of his hearers saying, "If only I had been there! How quick I would have been to help the Baby!" To which Luther replied: "Yes, you would! . . .Why don't you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbor. You ought to serve him, for what you do to your neighbor in need you do to the Lord Christ himself."<sup>10</sup>

With two significant exceptions, this medieval and Reformation Christ-mysticism has been conspicuous by its absence in modern contemporary Christian thinking. Theological resistance

against this internalizing of the Christ-Life has come from Barth, Brunner, and Niebuhr—none of whom has anything good to say for mysticism and all of whom are notably inarticulate in expounding the *ordo salutis*. The first exception referred to is in popular piety in which the personal equation between Christ and the believer is a trademark of "orthodoxy" or what is sometimes called "warm evangelicalism." "Billy" Graham's invitation is: "Accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior." Curiously enough, while this formula is widely used in various forms by preachers, Biblical theologians, evangelists, missionaries, almost no serious theological attention has been given to the meaning of this formula. It is everywhere assumed by those who speak this kind of religious, pietistic language that everyone intuitively understands what this means.

It has remained to existentialist theologians, such as Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich to take up the internal dimension of the Christian life as the Christ-Life in a serious and responsible way, and this is the second exception alluded to above. Referring to the cross of Christ as the "event of redemption," Bultmann says: "To believe in the cross of Christ does not mean to concern ourselves with a mythical process wrought outside of us and our world, or with an objective event turned by God to our advantage, but rather to

<sup>10</sup> From Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, Abingdon, 1950, p. 354. In the carol popularly ascribed to Luther, *Away in a Manger*, the second stanza abruptly moves from the nativity scene to ". . . I love Thee, Lord Jesus, Look down from the sky, And stay by my side until morning is nigh."

make the cross of Christ our own, to undergo crucifixion with him. . . . The preaching of the cross as the event of redemption challenges all who hear it to appropriate this significance for themselves, to be willing to be crucified with Christ."<sup>11</sup> Tillich in commenting on the "New Creation,"<sup>12</sup> says: "The New Being is not something that simply takes the place of the Old Being. But it is a renewal of the Old which has been corrupted, distorted, split and almost destroyed. But not wholly destroyed. Salvation does not destroy creation; but it transforms the Old Creation into a New one. Therefore we can speak of the New in terms of a *re*-newal: The threefold '*re*,' namely, *re*-conciliation, *re*-union, *re*-resurrection."<sup>13</sup>

One reason why existentialism has been utilized by many contemporary theologians is simply because it posits everything on the *ambivalence* of existence (meaning *and* meaninglessness), and this theoretically at least allows for weighting the teeter-totter on the side of Christian faith, as Sartre and others would weight it on the side of brave, resolute atheism. Existentialism takes seriously the threat of non-being, and when Christian theology

adopts an existential perspective, it can only preach renewal as coming out of rather than by-passing death, estrangement, non-being, and meaninglessness. Thus life-through-death whether as monomyth, psychic symbol, or Christ-Life can and frequently does attach itself today to existential analyses. The level of this perspective is most likely psychic rather than mythic, more interiorized than externalized.

On the outside of contemporary man's world, the hero is as dead as Horatio Alger, and modern novelists, dramatists, artists in monotonous refrain repeat the drab, unexciting, and senseless patterns of existence. Inside, however, things are different. If the mythic level is for most intelligent persons today really unreal, if still quaint and intriguing, the inner world of personality ambivalence is all too real. Interestingly enough college students rightly or wrongly look to religion as personality-integration-potential, though they may bluntly deny that faith has anything to do with their daily moral decisions or with the big social and political issues of the day.<sup>14</sup>

For many more who find the Christ-Life no help whatever, life-through-death may still be a conscious or unconscious goal. Violence, sex, drugs, jazz and alcohol may be the desperate mediators between an intolerable existence and a momentary vision or experience of something better. In such

<sup>11</sup> "New Testament and Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. by H. W. Bartsch, Macmillan, 1953, pp. 36, 37.

<sup>12</sup> Gal. 6:15; cf. II Cor. 5:17—"If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."

<sup>13</sup> *The New Being*, Scribner's, 1955, p. 20. Tillich interprets the threefold *re* in psychic rather than doctrinal terms. Cf. "it is the certainty of one's own victory over the death of existential estrangement which creates the certainty of the Resurrection of the Christ as event and symbol." *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957, p. 155.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Changing Values in College*, by Philip E. Jacob, Harper, 1957; *What College Students Think*, ed. by Rose K. Goldsen and others, Van Nostrand, 1960; and numerous popular surveys, such as, "Youth: The Cool Generation," by George Gallup and Evan Hill, *Saturday Evening Post*, Dec. 30, 1961.

de-sacralized ways the monomyth and perhaps also the Christ-Life still reflect their universality and their potency.

### Conclusion

It has been the purpose of this essay to suggest that *in addition to* the Biblical-doctrinal interpretation of the Christ-Life, it is also possible and desirable to interpret it as both mythic and psychic symbol. Neither displacement nor discrediting of one by the other is necessary. The general neglect of the mythic and psychic approach *among theologians* has been fostered by the false fear that the *kerygma* would be somehow endangered. But the Christ-Life's own integrity is not imperilled by observing its mythic-psychic parallels—unless it must be proclaimed as isolated rather than as related truth.

The testimony of the late Victor

White may suggest the positive apologetic value of what this essay has maintained. "Fifty years or so ago," he wrote, "it seems to have been widely supposed that these discoveries of similarity between Christian and pagan mysteries . . . somehow made nonsense of Christianity . . . But I remember when, as a boy, I read one of those books published by the Rationalist Press, it had just the opposite effect on me to that intended. The Christian Scriptures and the Catholic rites to which I was accustomed, without losing their wonted sense, gained a quality and a sense of which my pastors and catechisms had told me nothing; a sense of solidarity with creation, with the processes of nature, with the cycles of the seasons . . . (and) a new sense of solidarity with humanity."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *God and the Unconscious*, Harvill Press, 1953, pp. 223f.

## The Last Time Out . . .

One day, while everyone  
Was sitting around doing  
nothing,  
Christ came in.  
Everybody said, "No,  
Man, not again. We're  
Really not up to it.  
Why don't you go someplace  
else?"  
He looked at them and showed  
Them the nail marks on His  
hands  
And feet, and they said,  
"Man, that's real touching. Now  
Go someplace else."  
He showed them  
His side where the  
Spear had been, and the  
scratches  
On His forehead where the  
Thorns were, and they  
Said, "Sad, Man, real sad. Just  
Go . . . someplace else."  
Only He wouldn't go,  
So they crucified Him again  
And He just hung there.  
They laughed and knew  
He was faking, because  
This time He didn't  
Say, "Father, forgive them. . ."

—William W. Savage, Jr., in *motive* Magazine,  
January, 1962. Used with permission.

# TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE THOUGHT OF PAUL TILlich

DAVID H. HOPPER

IN spite of all that has been written about the theological and/or philosophical works of Paul Tillich, there remains a certain fascination about the thought of this man. There are at least two reasons for this phenomenon.

First, there is the architectonic structure of his thought, the fact that every part of his theological system is inter-related with every other part. This of course can be said, in some sense, of every good system of thought; but in reading Tillich one becomes especially aware of this aspect of his work. Each part of the system has been carefully fashioned to fit in with every other part. But, in Tillich, each part also in some degree reflects the whole. One cannot escape a sense of wonder at his work. Here one encounters a master craftsman—and it is fascinating to watch him build.

The second reason for the fascination with Tillich's thought is the strangeness of it. Ontology is itself a strange thing in our modern technological world and quite naturally attracts attention. But even beyond this, Tillich's key phrases—"being-itself," "ultimate concern," "ecstatic reason," etc.—bear their own peculiar quality of strangeness and mystery. As a result one often reads his works with a sense of tentativeness and even with some anxiety, because one is never quite sure of having captured the full meaning of the terms and categories he uses. This

sense is especially heightened for those who lack familiarity with the particular German idealist tradition out of which Tillich himself comes.

Frankly I am fascinated by Tillich's thought on both these counts. But I am less than satisfied with the second reason, because a lack of attainable knowledge on my part is hardly an adequate reason for ascribing profundity to another. Even more important, such a lack of understanding inevitably postpones the vital judgment as to whether in the final analysis Tillich's thought represents a personally meaningful interpretation of reality. One must finally move beyond the aesthetic appreciation of Tillich's work and ask the question of its existential validity.

## I

The first and obvious question which one must ask in seeking to understand the basic lines of Tillich's thought is: Where does one begin?

In partial answer to this question, one might suggest that the place not to begin is with the *Systematic Theology*. These two volumes represent Tillich's most polished work; and in the *Systematic Theology* the interdependence of all the parts of the system is so intricately worked out that to try to identify the major building blocks primarily on the basis of that work is an exceedingly difficult task.

Of course, to by-pass initially this

late, major work might pose some problems if there were indications that Tillich's thought had undergone significant shifts during the course of his life. This, however, does not appear to be the case. In partial justification for this view, it is important to note in connection with Tillich's publications that at least three of his more important works, *The Theology of Culture* (1959), *The Protestant Era* (1948), and *The Interpretation of History* (1936), represent collections of articles, which in terms of the dates of original forms one finds generally very wide span of years. Furthermore, as one compares the articles as they appear in the later volumes with their original forms one finds generally very little in the way of changes or revisions and nothing at all to indicate a major shift in thought. What Tillich said in his 1949 article, "Beyond Religious Socialism: How My Mind Has Changed in the Last Decade," I hold to be true of the great portion of his adult life:

"Looking at the past decade of my life I see no dramatic changes of mind but a slow development of my convictions in the direction of greater clarity and certainty. Above all, I have come to realize that a few great and lasting things are decisive for the human mind, and that to cling to them is more important than to look for dramatic changes."<sup>1</sup>

In the light of this evidence, a further question can be asked: How far

back, then, does one go in quest of these "few great and lasting things" which, it is to be assumed, underlie the thought of Tillich?

In his chapter, "Autobiographical Reflections," in the Kegley and Bretall volume, *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, he remarks; "In Marburg, in 1925, I began work on my *Systematic Theology*, the first volume of which appeared in 1951."<sup>2</sup> For Tillich to have begun writing the *Systematic Theology* in 1925 suggests that apparently by that year he had formulated his basic ontological categories. But there is no reason to stop here. In a 1922 article, marking the 100th anniversary of Albrecht Ritschl's birth, he wrote that to understand God in Ritschl's terms as a correlate of the ethical consciousness and to define religion by means of such a correlation was "to surrender the possibility of viewing the majesty of God as the Unconditionally Real in all being, in all events, in all consciousness. One must travel to an island in order to find such a God (as Ritschl's), but then the sea of the rest of reality is given over to the storms of profanation and chaos."<sup>3</sup>

This reference certainly gives indication that by 1922 as well, an ontological vantage point had been achieved. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the speech that Tillich delivered before the Kantian Society of Berlin in 1919: "Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur." Obviously the

<sup>2</sup> *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, ed. C. W. Kegley and R. W. Bretall, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1952), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> "Albrecht Ritschl, zu seinem 100 Geburtstag," *Theologische Blätter*, vol. I (March, 1922), col. 52. My translation.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Tillich, "Beyond Religious Socialism: How My Mind Has Changed in the Past Decade," *The Christian Century*, vol. LXVI (June 15, 1949), p. 733.

concept of a "theology of culture" involved a much broader definition of the term "theology" than could be anticipated from within the conventional theological tradition.

It is the present writer's belief that the lines of Tillich's thought were clearly drawn in his 1912 work on Schelling, *Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung*, the thesis for his degree of Licentiate of Theology.<sup>4</sup> This important work has, I believe, been overlooked by many interpreters of Tillich's thought, perhaps because of the deceptive nature of the title. Actually the terms "mystical" and "guilt," as Tillich uses them in this thesis, have a much broader meaning than might be assumed on the basis of common usage. They represent, in fact, the ontological categories of identity and separation. Furthermore, what makes this treatise even more basic for an understanding of Tillich's work is the fact that in it he sets his discussion of Schelling in the context of an interpretation of the course of ontological thought in Greek and Western thought.

One cannot treat fully here the content of *Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein* . . . but a summary of the major points of Tillich's analysis is possible and should be enough to suggest that this work represents the most important source for understanding Tillich's philosophical genealogy and his own theological-philosophical system.

## II

The first point that Tillich makes in his interpretation of Greek and Western ontological thought is that there have been essentially two major problems

with which ontology has been concerned: the problem of the one and the many and the problem of the subject-object cleavage.

Early Greek and Platonic thought was concerned primarily with the question of the one and the many. The ontological "solution" proposed by the Socratic-Platonic school was to presuppose the reality of the idea and to assert in conjunction with this that that idea was most real which comprehended the greatest multiplicity. Thus in Plato the Good was the most real; in Plotinus, the One. The way to the most real was basically a rational process of subsuming the particular under the general. Tillich points out in connection with this essentialist-ontology that the proposed solution was really incomplete, because union with the Good, or the One, on the part of the particular subject or individual always necessitated a "leap" in order for the individual to leave behind the last particularity, to wit, the self. Such a "leap," of course, involved the will—and not the intellect alone.

The second problem, the subject-object cleavage, came to the fore with the figure of Augustine. Here, in contrast to the earlier Greek tradition, an antithesis was conceived to exist between the internal and external world. The subject doubting all objects and the external world in general was believed to attain certainty on the basis of his own inner life. Truth was viewed as that which bore with it "self-certainty." It was Descartes, of course, in the later tradition who gave fullest expression to this understanding of truth. But Tillich

<sup>4</sup> Published in *Beiträge zur Förderung Christlicher Theologie*, vol. XVI, Gütersloh; Bertelsmann, 1912.

in discussing this particular formula takes note of an unresolved problem in the fact that the question of how a subject could achieve identity with and knowledge of an object was left unanswered.

Moving into a description and interpretation of ontological thought in the Medieval period, Tillich identifies what he regards as a creative synthesis of the two major ontological problems. In the thought of Nicholas Cusanus and Giordano Bruno, the antithesis of the one and many and the subject and object were taken up into the antitheses of the Infinite and the finite, the Infinite being understood in terms of a concept inherent in the self (ein "innerlicher Begriff"). Everything finite, by virtue of its inwardness ("Innerlichkeit"), shared in the Infinite; and the Infinite was implicit in every finite form. Every finite thing was a mirror of the Universal, a microcosm; and man was the most perfect reflection of the Universal.

It was Leibnitz who later gave the most thorough explication of this line of thought with his idea of the monad. The monad represented the identity of subject and object, the one and the many, the Infinite and the finite. The act of knowing was an internal occurrence, an independent coming-to-consciousness of the monad without external influences. In so far as it was most itself, the monad was in the Universal; for the Universal was in every monad. Here the Greek understanding of identity manifested itself in the tendency to interpret truth as the "One." But also, in line with Augustine, who turned away from the external world and became absorbed in the inner life,

Leibnitz found in himself the "All," the Universal.

In the course of his description of these various developments in ontological analysis, Tillich naturally takes special note of particular forms of the principle of identity, the principle which is fundamental to all ontology and which, of course, is to be understood in relation to some form of separation, be it the one and the many, the subject-object cleavage, or the Infinite-finite dichotomy. In treating the thought of Cusanus and Bruno, for example, he underlines the principle of the coincidence of opposites by which he feels any absolute ontological antithesis is ruled out. According to this principle there can be no absolute antithesis between the Infinite and the finite, between God and man; because, no matter how great the antithesis is conceived to be, a basic identity is always presupposed, for that which has no common ground, no moment of identity, cannot be viewed as standing in contradiction.

Still another form of the principle of identity is indicated in Tillich's later discussion of Spinoza. The latter built in part upon the thought of Leibnitz, but he spoke in terms of a Universal Substance and thereby moved away from Leibnitz's individualistic concept of the microcosm. Spinoza introduced this other form of identity in his definition of autonomy. Autonomy, as defined by Spinoza, is *not* self-will; it is action according to the law of one's own nature. This understanding of autonomy found later elaboration in Kant's analysis of the practical reason. The moral law, for Kant, was a law of man's nature; and therefore, to act morally was to recognize and act in ac-

cord with the moral structure of the self.

It is against this general background that Tillich then introduces his interpretation of Schelling, whom he regards as an important pivotal figure in the course of ontological thought. Schelling, according to Tillich, attempted in the first period of his thought to work out an absolute identity system which would correct and overcome various antinomies and contradictions which existed in all previous systems. But with the aid of insights gained from Fichte, he saw that these efforts really were an attempt to reduce freedom to necessity, as, for example, in the Spinozistic and Kantian principle of autonomy. The alternative which Schelling proposed in the second period of his thought was to regard necessity and freedom as dual aspects of reality. Neither, finally, could be reduced to the other. God, he said, must be understood as a synthesis and not a thesis standing over against the world. God is both necessity and freedom, essence and existence. God cannot, in the final analysis, be objectified because he is not only eternal being but eternal becoming. There is thus in God himself a conflict between the rational and the irrational; but without this antithesis there is ultimately no life, no movement, no creativity.

Tillich's own thought builds upon this foundation of Schelling. His dependence upon the latter is apparent in the following quotation from *The Courage to Be* (1952):

"If one is asked how non-being is related to being itself, one can only answer metaphorically: being 'em-

braces' itself and non-being. Being has non-being 'within' itself as that which is eternally present and eternally overcome in the process of the divine life. The ground of everything that is is not a dead identity without movement and becoming, it is living creativity. Creatively it affirms itself, eternally conquering its own non-being. As such it is the pattern of the self-affirmation of every finite being and the source of the courage to be."<sup>5</sup>

One could go on to cite further examples of Tillich's kinship of spirit with Schelling, in Christology, in anthropology, and also in the concern for history as the realm in which freedom is actualized. But this would take us beyond our original purpose. We must turn therefore towards a definition of the basic categories which govern Tillich's system. This will be done in connection with a brief summary of major points in the *Systematic Theology* as they are illumined by the preceding analysis of *Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein*. . . .

### III

In discussing the relationship of philosophy to theology in the Introduction of the *Systematic Theology*, Tillich suggests that philosophy should be understood as "*that cognitive approach to reality in which reality as such is the object.*"<sup>6</sup> He then goes on to say in a sentence that could well be prefaced by a "but": "Reality as such,

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, (London: Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1951, p. 18.

or reality as a whole, is not the whole of reality. . . ."<sup>7</sup> Tillich is here introducing the distinction between essence and existence, necessity and freedom. Man, he is saying, is related passively to reality as knower and actively as doer. "Reality as such," "reality as a whole," is reality as it is received and known by the structure of the mind. Objective reality has a "structure which makes reality a whole and therefore a potential object of knowledge."<sup>8</sup> External or objective reality has a structure of reason as also does the knowing subject.<sup>9</sup> To know is to obey the law of the structure of the mind which corresponds to a structure of reason inhering in objective reality (or "reality as a whole"). This represents Tillich's adaptation to the realm of reason of the principle of autonomy as defined by Spinoza and Kant. To assert that there is an objective structure of reason is not to do violence to the idea of subjective reason since the two are not in contradiction. On the contrary, it is the answer which Tillich proposes to the question he raised about the understanding of truth in the thought of Augustine and Descartes.<sup>10</sup>

But just as "reality as a whole" is not "the whole of reality," so also this passive relation to reality is not the only way in which man is related to reality. Man also shapes reality, he transforms and adapts it to his own purposes and goals. This aspect of man's relationship to reality is best illustrated by man's aesthetic activity, though, of course, it extends also to his ethical and

political acts. One will recall that in his discussion of the Socratic-Platonic concept of truth Tillich described the attainment of the Good as a process of subsuming the particular under the general. This was an understanding of truth governed essentially by necessity. In man's aesthetic activity (and also in politics), however, that pattern is reversed and man seeks to actualize the general in the particular; he strives to give concrete form to meaning and value. This aspect of man's relationship to reality is "existential"; it presupposes freedom and self-affirmation. In Tillich this feature of man's reason is defined in terms of "ontological reason,"<sup>11</sup> but it underlies also the term "ultimate concern" and is the basis for the distinction between "theology" and "philosophy." Man has power over himself (*Selbstbemächtigung*); he affirms himself and in doing so he also affirms meaning and purpose in life and strives to achieve goals. Thus in Tillich's thought everyone who chooses to live, to create, to achieve, has an ultimate concern and is therefore "religious." As he has expressed it: "Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us."<sup>12</sup> It is on this basis also that Tillich can speak of a "theology of culture" and can also assert that "no cultural creation can hide its religious ground or its rational formation."<sup>13</sup>

It is at this point, however, that still a further dimension is added to Til-

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>10</sup> See above.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *S.T.*, vol. 1, pp. 72-75.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948, p. 57.

lich's system. Confronted by the finite character of his freedom and the fact that the meaning and goals which he affirms have a temporal character and limitation, man is tempted to "make himself existentially the center of himself and his world."<sup>14</sup> He claims a final meaning for his cultural creations and achievements—and thereby he denies the infinite ground of his own being and creativity. Man's will to self-hood and his creative achievements become the occasion of his estrangement from God. His self-affirmation becomes destructive self-elevation. It is in this context that such categories as "the demonic," "the Protestant principle," "heteronomy," and "archaism" find their meaning. It is also in this context that the principle of the "coincidence of opposites" finds its summary expression, for where there is the possibility of the greatest alienation so also is there the possibility of the greatest identity. It is through Jesus that the identity between finite and Infinite Freedom is made manifest; it is through "Jesus as the Christ" that all aspects of existential estrangement are overcome. In asserting this, Tillich observes: ". . . in following him we are liberated from the authority of everything finite in him, from his special traditions, from any legalistic understanding of his ethics. Only as the crucified is he 'grace and truth' and not law. Only as he who has sacrificed his flesh, that is, his historical existence, is he Spirit or New Creature."<sup>15</sup> This reality of the New Being—manifested in

Jesus as the Christ—becomes the possibility of New Being for all who share finite freedom. It bears universal validity since it points to the transcendence of finite freedom itself. "Jesus as the Christ" is the "final revelation" in that this revelation "has the power of negating itself without losing itself."<sup>16</sup> "He who is the bearer of the final revelation must surrender his finitude—not only his life but also his finite power and knowledge and perfection. In doing so he affirms that he is the bearer of final revelation. . . ."<sup>17</sup>

It is difficult to interpret Tillich's thought without using his own words to do so. This is a major problem for all those who set themselves an interpretative task. The problem is posed in an acute form in Tillich's case, however, because Tillich regards systematic theology as an essentially creative enterprise. And consistent with this concept of systematic theology, he reveals a propensity for giving meanings to words that are in many instances peculiar to his own system. Nevertheless it is possible to identify in the foregoing "summary" of the system the major philosophical concepts that govern that system and to view then his key words in the context of these concepts.

The major presupposition of Tillich's thought is the idea of the microcosm. Just as the Socratic-Platonic school presupposed the reality of the Idea, so also Tillich presupposes the idea of man as a microcosm. His whole system is founded upon this concept; to reject this is to reject the whole. It

<sup>14</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. II, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1957, p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> *S.T.*, vol. I, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

underlies his epistemology; it is the basis of his distinction between objective and subjective reason. It is implied always in his use of the word "autonomy," a second but subordinate major category. The same idea of the microcosm is fundamental also to the "existential" aspects of his thought when he moves from the sphere of essence and autonomy to that of freedom. It is the ground of the principle of the coincidence of opposites, the third major, but also subordinate, ontological category. It is the basis of Tillich's Christology. It underlies his distinction between the "Universal" and the "concrete" and governs also his ideas of "participation" and "community."

Because of his dependence upon these three major ontological categories, I do not believe that one need expect any "surprises" in the still-to-be-published third volume of the *Systematic Theology*. What he will have to say about the subjects of "Life and the Spirit" and "History and the Kingdom of God" has been essentially indicated already in essays and articles on these themes. One can expect, of course, subtle elaborations of previous points, but that he will say anything really "new" is, in my opinion, highly problematical. One can expect a fuller

discussion of Tillich's interpretation of "spirit" as that which embraces both self-hood and meaning. In this connection he will probably express again his already explicit rejection of the pan-logical interpretation (implying necessity) in Hegel's thought. He will return to the idea of the "kairos" as the historical moment of judgment upon devitalized and destructive structures of meaning and the moment also for creating new and vital structures of meaning. Finally, one can expect to hear some more about the "latent church," a theme which has not been fully developed in his writings thus far.

To venture a prediction of what a man will say in a forthcoming book can be regarded, of course, as highly presumptuous. But if, as has been suggested in this article, Tillich's system is to be understood in terms of a relatively few clear-cut ontological categories, then it is one way at least of finding out whether one understands at all what this master craftsman is building. One can be sure that when completed it will be a beautiful mansion of thought but whether one will finally live—or can live—in such a mansion is the question each one must answer for himself.

# EXISTENTIAL PREACHING

JOHN KILLINGER

THERE is hardly a minister anywhere who has not at some time in his ministry faced the dilemma Karl Barth has spoken of in an early essay. "I sought to find my way," says Barth, "between the problem of human life on the one hand and the content of the Bible on the other. As a minister I wanted to speak to the people in the infinite contradiction of their life, but to speak the no less infinite message of the Bible, which was as much of a riddle as life."<sup>1</sup> As Barth was to conclude later, the Bible, properly understood, has a way of making its own relevance to life; and any minister who has not yet made this discovery might do well to read Barth, commencing with the chapter in *The Word of God and the Word of Man* entitled "The Strange New World within the Bible."

But while some ministers have difficulty in seeing the relevance of the Bible to life, others, almost totally enveloped in the biblical world view, have equal difficulty in treating life seriously. Steeped in biblical motifs and textual insights and hermeneutical principles, they lack the kind of respect for the human situation in all of its realism and imperfection that the Word of God itself has for it and without which it would be an unreal Word. Reading Barth will probably not balance this point of view; here it would surely be better to "close your Barth and open

your Tillich." In fact, it would probably prove rewarding to read heavily in the works of all the existentialists, Sartre and Camus as well as Kierkegaard and Tillich, for they are all, atheists and theists alike, eminently concerned about the meaning of human existence. To preaching that has an overbearing biblical mien, the reading of them will bring a new human warmth, a new poignancy, a new sense of the need for relevance; in short, it will remind the man who has shut himself up in an ivory tower with the biblical Word of the starkly realistic situation to which that Word is addressed.

What sort of thing may the minister expect to find in reading the existentialists? What are some of their major emphases, and how will these bring a new note into his preaching of the Gospel? Is there really a thing called "existential" preaching, or is it merely a new label for something that has been around a long, long time? These questions are all legitimate, especially before one undertakes a serious reading of writers such as Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, who have not been especially friendly to Christianity. Therefore we shall look briefly at some of the leading tenets of their thought, and suggest the area of their relevance to Christian preaching. Who is to say? Perhaps we shall be able to address them as the Christian Statius, in Dante's *Purgatorio*, addressed the pagan poet Virgil

<sup>1</sup> *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, tr. Douglas Horton (Harper, New York, 1957), p. 100.

—as ones who bore the lantern into the night so that, although they themselves could not see the way, they illumined the path for those who followed.

## I

In the first place, the existentialists make a careful distinction between "concerned" truth and "abstract" truth, or truth that is for people and truth that exists in mere propositional statements. This was really the point of Kierkegaard's contention with Hegelianism. Hegel builds a spacious castle of abstract thought, said Kierkegaard, while in real life he must content himself with living in a small hut. To this day the existentialists have not let up in their attack on the kind of abstract system Hegel propounded. More recently, Simone de Beauvoir wrote of having experienced a great feeling of calm while reading Hegel in the cold, impersonal setting of the Bibliothèque Nationale; but, she complained, "once I got into the street again, into my life, out of the system, beneath a real sky, the system was no longer of any use to me: what it had offered me, under a show of the infinite, was the consolations of death; and I again wanted to live in the midst of living men."<sup>2</sup> Truth that is important "in the midst of living men" is the only kind the existentialists are interested in. All the rest, they say, is beside the point. People are not really concerned about categorical hypotheses; they have their lives to live! They are not interested in abstract and synthetic systems of thought; they eat

grain and hash, and earn their livings in the crowded marketplace! Abjure therefore every truth that is not truth relevant to man where he lives!

Is it difficult to draw a conclusion from this for preaching? Indeed, how often it is necessary for most of us to get our feet back on the ground, to make the sermon walk up and down the street where people live, and there, in surroundings they are accustomed to, acquaint them with Christ. How many disappointments in the pulpit result from this very failure to confine our sermons to concerned truth, to truth that is for people. The deadliest thing that can happen to the Gospel is not that it should be attacked—"the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"—or that it should be imprisoned—Paul wrote from prison that "the Word of God is not bound"—but that it should get spun into a cloud of ethereal fluffiness that just floats and floats and floats over the heads of the congregation! One of the most devastating compliments I ever had paid to thirty minutes of attempting to preach was "Pastor, that was a *lovely* sermon." Talk about damning with faint praise!—so innocuous a phrase must have suited a sermon that was equally innocuous. But how often it is the case with our preaching that that is the most charitable thing that may be said for it—that it is, alas!, "*lovely*," or "*fine*," or "*interesting*," or even "*unique*."

Perhaps it is because our own experience of the Gospel we preach fails to be a continuing one, so that we are often found preaching out of the "terminal moraine" of a faith-situation. Exhausted and enervated by parish duties (or perhaps "parish privileges")

<sup>2</sup> *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, tr. Bernard Frechtman. Philosophical Library, New York, 1948, p. 158.

is the better expression), we do not live moment by moment in the quiet excitement of the Word of which we are the bearers. Here Barth, who was himself much influenced by the existentialists, has a meaningful word for us: we are *witnesses* to the faith, and not mere reporters. A witness is involved in that to which he witnesses, is affected by it and modified by it, whereas a reporter is not involved, not affected and not modified. It is impossible to preach the Gospel as a mere reporter (though this is what we often try to do!); to preach the Gospel one must be a witness to it. The very tone of his voice must say "I have been caught up in this!" The very radiance of his facial expression and the natural vitality of his bodily gestures must say "I have been changed by this!" And then the very words of his sermon will be relevant words, words that are not mere "sound and fury," but, much more, words that are effective vehicles for concerned truth.

## II

Concerned truth, before it can ever become truth for a community, must of course be truth for individuals, and it is the passionate plea for individualism that is generally most readily identified with existentialism. If Kierkegaard was disturbed by abstract philosophy, he was even more disturbed by men's willingness to be anonymous, to be pale reflections of "man-in-general." Many men are even too spiritless to be sinners, he said; they have become *courant*, like coins rubbed bare of their superscriptions. Therefore he decided to become a contemporary Socrates, whom he once described as "a gad-fly

who provoked people by means of the individual's passion, not allowing him to admire indolently and effeminately, but demanding his self of him."<sup>3</sup> Most of his sermons and polemics became variations on a single theme: How difficult it is to be a Christian in Christendom, where nothing is demanded of individuals!

Existentialists in our own century have warned against other soulless aggregates to which men tend to surrender themselves. Heidegger speaks of the simple daily cares that engage our attention while life in its more dramatic aspects slips silently by. Karl Jaspers insistently reminds us that our technological culture threatens to make us mass-men. Gabriel Marcel includes even psychology, with its reduction of life to an analyzable amalgamation of "functions," among the enemies of individualism. Sartre and Beauvoir and Camus continue the battle enjoined by Nietzsche against the ethics of "the herd," which they claim militates against ethics on the more genuine level of what it means to live authentically. Though their vocabulary varies, all of these thinkers tend to identify as the "authentic" man the one who holds himself strictly accountable for all his actions, without consigning them to the responsibility of the masses—he alone has a real existence.

It is true, of course, that man cannot be the only center of gravity, that there must always be another and more powerful center in God himself. Barth in a phrase originally intended for another connection has well described

<sup>3</sup> *The Journals of Kierkegaard*, ed. Alexander Dru, Harper, New York, 1958, p. 98.

the plight of the nontheistic existentialist: "Man has become man with a vengeance, but there is no salvation in that."<sup>4</sup> Yet there are few preachers who could not profit from the habit of regarding their congregations as congregations of individuals, and not as faceless aggregates. How much more effective sermons are when addressed to persons and not to shadows! How much more relevant dogmatic preaching is when it becomes preaching for persons, and not just preaching for the theme's sake or preaching for the Church's sake!

Christ never in his most theological moments lost sight of the individual. Peter at Pentecost did not indulge in vague reveries about "the Jesus whom one tends to crucify," but shot home to them, "This Jesus, whom *you* crucified, God has raised from the dead!" It is the difference between the fog and the bolt from the sun! To be sure, there are often general matters that must be treated in the sermon, but it should be remembered that they would not be general matters if they did not concern so many *people*. There is a sense in which all good preaching is like what Philip did—it sits in the chariot next to the Ethiopian and speaks to him! It rejects the blurred and hazy aim for focused sighting; it rejects grapeshot for single shells, and, as Beecher said, at every shot it looks to see its game fall.

### III

The means by which the existentialists attempt to return a man to his authentic state as an individual is by compelling him, in a moment of crisis,

to face the choice between his old, unauthentic way of life and the possibility of his becoming authentic. First the man is accused of "playing a role"—of assuming the guise that is generally expected of him. Sartre's famous illustration of this is the waiter who enters the room a little too much like a waiter, carries his tray a little too much like a waiter, speaks like a waiter, bows like a waiter, and so on. He has surrendered his own personality for that of the typical waiter. He has become a thing rather than a person. He has taken on so many accretions from his social and cultural milieu that his real self is buried quite deeply out of sight. But it is not enough simply to tell a man that he is playing a role; the next step is to *show* him that he is playing a role, to dramatize the accusation for him in such a way that he actually feels the force of it. This the existentialist accomplishes by thrusting him into a crisis-situation. The favorite is a facing-death situation (although Jaspers includes suffering, conflict, and guilt as crisis-situations). Again, Sartre's is the classic example. A man is placed on the edge of a precipice. As he stares down into the abyss, he confronts his own ceasing-to-be, his own nothingness. In this instant, all the accretions of society and culture drop away, and he becomes free. He faces the dreadful choice between life and death. He sees that his previous life has, in a sense, been a bit of nothingness, a thing without shape and human authenticity. He can will to become a real person, or he can choose the abyss again. To be sure, most people, when they are confronted by the choice, choose the easier way of being unauthentic, for

<sup>4</sup> *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, p. 205.

they do not wish to bear the responsibility for what they are and what they do as they would have to if they were forging their own individualities. They would rather be part of the mass than face their "dreadful freedom."

Here again, in the matter of choice, existentialism is related to Christian preaching. Whether you are neo-orthodox or not, the business of preaching is the producing of crisis! As the Scriptures say, "Behold, I set before you a way of life and a way of death."<sup>5</sup> As Bultmann has written, "the call to believe in one true God is simultaneously a call to *repentance*."<sup>6</sup> The hearer of the sermon must be brought to the precipice and made to face his situation. No preacher can afford to be "cute" and "clever" and merely superficial in his pulpit; he must set to work at once to reduce the situation to its great, bare facts. Anything less is to be regarded as—obscene. Men must be confronted with God's Word in such a way that they are made to see that it is *God's* Word that confronts them, and that bids them make their choice between life and death! The preacher must here set no shrubs upon the horizon that a man may hide behind, but level it off so a man may see where the land ends and the sky begins. The crisis must be basic, it must be decisive, riving the very soul to its depths; else preaching has not done its work. By tone and by content, it must say to men in the congregation, "Stop your ears, for if you hear this you will be changed!" Only such

preaching will produce the catharsis, the repentance, the renewal that is aimed at, because only it is "concerned truth," only it makes men answer.

#### IV

One of the "hard words" of existentialism is that the choice to be an authentic individual can never be made finally, or once for all, but must constantly be remade. If, translated into Christian terms, this sounds very much like a positive statement of the idea of apostasy, that is just what it is, and anyone who holds that idea a heresy in the Christian faith is recommended to another reading of the book of Hebrews and Paul's letter to the Galatians, where at least some manner of falling away is dealt with, whether it is to damnation or not. The idea in the existentialist leads to the most rigorous program of self-examination, whereby he must ascertain again and again (theoretically at every moment) whether he is "behaving" properly. Nor is the concept alien to the best in Christianity: consider St. Paul's *mot*, "I die daily." It is only by this facing crucifixion with Christ every day that the Christian—or the Christian minister—keeps himself alive in Christ. Only thus are the great doctrines of the Christian faith—repentance, justification, etc.—kept in a meaningful relationship to life "in the midst of living men."

There must also be something of this perpetual death and rebirth in preaching itself, or it loses its dynamic. What was excellent preaching last year is not necessarily excellent preaching this year. Preaching too can become adapted to a role—or, more specifical-

<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah 21:8.

<sup>6</sup> *Theology of the New Testament*, tr. Kendrick Grobel. Scribner's, New York, 1951, I, p. 73.

ly, to a particular style or doctrinal idea that is retreated into again and again. Such preaching may become an extension of last year's preaching rather than an extension of the Word that is God's. To remain good proclamation, preaching must continually examine itself in the light of its possible ceasing-to-be. Only the conceivable annihilation of preaching is able to test for us its "ultimate concern." Dietrich Ritschl, in his little book *A Theology of Proclamation*, takes occasion to remark that, inasmuch as most of our preaching is nonexistential and banal, God may well one day take the opportunity of preaching away from us. Recently a friend reported Ritschl as having said, after a trip to Europe, that this is already happening in many places there. Here is a touchstone for your Sunday sermon week by week: is this the kind of preaching God will spare when he puts a moratorium on all preaching that is not essentially Christian?

Only preaching that conceives of its own death, of its own infinite limitation, can remain Christian preaching. The minute it assumes that the word it has said is a definitive and adequate mediation of the Word God has said, it calcifies into the "sacred" and becomes idolatrous and untrue. The refusal to become "religious" is one of the most important self-denials of the minister. Kierkegaard and Barth were both quite right in maintaining that Jesus came to destroy the distinction between the sacred and the secular, which always was a false distinction raised by the pride of man. And if Christ is alive in the proclamation we make, he will cut like an acid through every membrane

of "sacredness" that tries to grow between the preacher and the world in which he lives! He will destroy the self-consciousness of preaching, which leads to playing a role, and attach the consciousness directly back to the kerygma itself, making the sermon transparent to the nexus of events which is its only reason for being! Only preaching that is aware of God and unaware of itself is worthy of the name.

This of course is the fallacy involved in speaking of so-called "great preaching." As soon as the Church begins to speak of "great preaching" it accuses itself of having passed out of the incandescent stage of faith and into a self-conscious stage where such categorical distinctions may be made; it begins to require of its ministers that they preach a certain kind of sermon judged delectable by a jury of sermon-tasters; and it frustrates unspeakably the dynamic nature of the growth of the Kingdom. As Kierkegaard often wished that we could get rid of the eighteen centuries intervening between first-century Christianity and ours, or at least of the Christendom that was the product of those centuries, so we might wish for Christian preaching that we could be rid of the development of preaching that has betrayed us into the very idea of "great preaching," and get back to the concept of preaching solely as an occasion for the Gospel to work upon our hearers!

Perhaps preaching, like the literature of existentialism, should be more experimental with form. For years the existentialists were regarded as less than academic because they expressed themselves in journals and plays and

novels rather than in the more customary style of philosophic dissertations. Not that they were not excellent literary stylists, for they were. It was just that men said, "We have never seen serious doctrines set forth in this manner." But the existentialists were aiming at the common market with their philosophy, at the man in the street, the man in the office building, the man on the subway; and so they adapted their forms to their methods. It may be that preaching must humble itself, must throw itself down from its tower of classical form, and once more give its message precedence over form, *or else, like classical philosophy, remain scholastic and insular and professional.*

As we have already observed, most people, when they are confronted by the existential moment of choice, take the easy way of the unauthentic life rather than the way of "dreadful freedom," where the true self must be posited over and over again. Unfortunately, it is probably so with ministers too. Most of us would rather live in comfortable bondage to the conventional image and diocesan machinery than face the terror of individual responsibility before God. A "Thus saith the Lord and so interpreteth my session" is much easier than an unqualified "Thus saith the Lord."

But the only way to creative preaching (i.e., preaching that deals existentially with the meaning of God for human life) lies under the wild skies of this dread and terror and suffering—under what Kierkegaard called *das Angst*. Heidegger has elaborated this concept of *Angst*, and what he says should be of meaning to the servant of

the Word: *Angst*, or anguish, is not the same as fear (*Furcht*), which is of something in particular; rather, *Angst* is a mood, an uneasy feeling about something indefinite; one merely feels "something uncanny." Isn't this precisely descriptive of what the creative preacher lives under? Wasn't Paul's "The good that I would do" part of it? and Luther's *Anfechtung*, that, despite his breakthrough, troubled him all his life? How much yeastier than the situation for deism's pleasant rural curates! No, it is suffering that is the spawning ground for real sermons, for revealing words about the Word that God reveals.

Kierkegaard complained in his day that none of the ministers in Copenhagen knew the meaning of suffering. Oh, they talked about suffering. They talked about it, and the more eloquently they talked about it, the larger were their salaries and the finer their carriages. In fact, their ability to suffer decreased geometrically as their speaking about it increased arithmetically.

Perhaps this is why the terribly neurotic Kierkegaard, and not they, became the progenitor of a whole new age in theology, as well as of a whole movement in the world of philosophy. In his journals<sup>7</sup> he described the moment in which he made his decision about his vocation. It was a Sunday afternoon, and he was sitting out in a cafe in the Frederiksberg Gardens smoking a cigar and watching the servant girls. He was struck by the wastedness of his life. Other men who were geniuses had made life easier for

<sup>7</sup> *Existence and Being*, tr. Werner Brock, Vision, London, 1949, pp. 365-66.

<sup>8</sup> *The Journals of Kierkegaard*, p. 93.

everyone. What could he do? Suddenly he knew! It would be his task to make things more difficult! At least, he carried on in his ironic vein, the men who wanted to make things easier would thank him for making things difficult so that they could make them easier again. But the real thrust of this insight was not comical at all; it was quite serious. After all, things can become so easy that they lose their meaning, and it was his vocation, beyond the veil of making things difficult, to restore meaning to life.

This task the Christian preacher must take seriously, both for himself and for his congregation. He must constantly preach out of that limbo of suffering whence a man tries to speak of the living God; and he must constantly invite his hearers into that limbo with him. There is no more descriptive word for good preaching than to say that it is courageous—it lives in the smoke and the sulphur (not the incense!) of the presence of a dangerous God, and the only peace it knows is a sensitized peace that is no peace.

## V

A final word must be said about the existential approach, lest these others seem too severe to be true. That is that the real existentialist does not take himself too seriously and, having cleared the ground of all other categories, at last fall into his own. Kierkegaard, for instance, always thought of his work as being a "corrective." If, in opposition to the present state of things, he exaggerated frequently, it was only to bring things back to dead center. Like a man on a listing ship, he had to throw his weight at an extreme

angle to right it. One might even say that he sometimes had to lie in order to say the truth.

There is a very real sense in which preaching must serve the same function. It is never truth in itself, but only as it is thrown in ballast against the human situation. That is why not all the sermons of Chrysostom or Calvin or F. W. Robertson are necessarily true today. The same sermons today, out of their "ecological matrix" (to borrow Joseph Sittler's term), might well perjure the revelation of God. This is why the task of preaching is so difficult—it seeks to mediate between the absolute and the relative, the eternal and the ephemeral, and if it is shortsighted in either direction it becomes a falsehood. Even worse, it becomes a blasphemy!

Preaching that is corrective in nature will refuse to become "religious" preaching. It will see itself as the Word of God without being the final Word of God, or without remaining the Word of God—as if the Word were a message inscribed in disappearing ink, meant to be communicated once, to a specific situation, and then lost. It lies in order to tell the truth, yet without regarding its lie as true.

But we must establish a corrective even against the corrective, lest even there we suffer "hardening of the categories." Taken in their context, in the situation to which they were addressed, there have been few truer words spoken about preaching than those of Barth in his early essay on "The Task of the Ministry": he says, "As ministers we ought to speak of God. We are human, however, and so cannot speak of God. We ought therefore to recog-

nize both our obligation and our inability and by that very recognition give God the glory."<sup>9</sup> But absolutize such a formula, and you are driven always to preach at the edge of despair. Who can preach? you ask. Rather set over against such a formula the reminder of Ritschl<sup>10</sup> that preaching is the function not of the minister alone but of the entire Christian congregation. Ah, you take heart, for there are others to share your guilt, your dread, your *Angst*! In some sense it is not just your sermon that you are preaching; it is the Church's too; and while you must guard against the absolutizing of the word that you speak, you are somewhat heartened against the complete relativization of it. The ship is righted, and may establish a course upon the seas!

Preaching thus conducted under the

<sup>9</sup> *op.cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>10</sup> *A Theology of Proclamation* (John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1960), pp. 123-24.

dialectical stress of its own situation takes itself seriously as the Word of God, but not too seriously. It sees itself for what it is: a word *about* the Word that God speaks, helping to bring the Word that God speaks to bear upon the lives of people who live "in the midst of living men"—and hoping thereby to *become* the Word of God.

Again we have come back to the central note in existential preaching—preaching is for people. It is God's Word, and therefore not to be handled lightly or irresponsibly. But it is also his Word *to men*, and there is an irresponsibility in the handling of the Word that does not seek to reveal it as a strikingly *relevant* Word. The Gospel is not Gospel as objective truth—it only *becomes* Gospel when it becomes "concerned" truth. In other words, it does not preach itself; it must be preached. And that is at once the glory and the terror of our calling!

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

JOHN HICK

Romans 8:28-39

**B**ELIEVING anything, and believing in anyone, is obviously more than agreeing with one's intellect to some statement. It is also behaving, and being in a state of mind to behave, in ways appropriate to what we believe. Suppose someone says that he is magically immune to fire, so that he can walk unharmed through flames and pick up hot coals. If he does confidently pick up burning coals, and walks without hesitation into a blazing fire, we should say that he really does believe that fire cannot hurt him. But if he shrinks back from the flames like anyone else we know that he really believes that fire *will* hurt him. For the test of our belief is found in our actions. A real belief makes an appropriate difference to the way we behave.

And to believe in God means to *live* on the basis that God is real. It means thinking, feeling and acting in terms of the reality of God. It means inhabiting this world as God's world; it means passing through time as God's time; it means treating oneself and every human being whom one meets as children of God; it means accepting our moral duties as of God's commanding and our life's experiences as of God's appointing; it means seeing all things in the light of God's presence and of God's purpose.

Now in our passage from the Letter

to the Romans, St. Paul indicates (though not in this order) the difference which believing in God makes for our attitude to the past, our attitude to the present moment, and our attitude to the future.

## I

Think first of our attitude to the *past*. The past which enters into our lives, and towards which we have an attitude, is the remembered past. This is necessarily a mixture. In part it is a set of happy recollections, pleasant highlights from across the years. But there is also another side to it. Because we are finite, weak, chronically self-centered creatures our remembered past is also a dark cloud from which we cannot escape. Whatever you or I or the next person may have achieved outwardly, in ways which the world recognizes—whatever success in business or profession, whatever amassing of wealth, whatever enviable good fortune in the eyes of friends and neighbors—still we are *all* conscious, in those moments which come to us of shattering self-knowledge, that we have missed the target in the growth of our own spirit, in other words, in what we *are*, and above all what we are in the sight of God. A person would have to be morally anaesthetised to think that he is all that he could be and should be. Which of us is not shadowed by a trail of years in which he has too much neg-

lected God and God's great purposes in the world; or by years in which he has been without the peace and joy of a deep Christian faith; or by years in which he has been lacking in warmth and richness of love towards those nearest to him, and in responsible concern for the world about him; or by a succession of years in which he has been most excessively and pitifully preoccupied with his own little self?

All this, in the language of theology, is the substance of sin, which means missing the mark set for us in God's purpose. And the worst thing about this is that it does not consist simply in what we have done but ought not to have done, but also in what we *are*. For we are now the same persons who have all these years been missing the mark, failing to be what God in His creative purpose has intended us to be. We cannot be conscious of God at all, as the infinitely good and perfect Being, the source of all love and joy and beauty, without at the same time being acutely conscious of our own missing of the mark.

But to believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ means not only to be aware in this way of having continually missed the mark, but to be made alive again even in face of this deadening fact. It means to receive forgiveness, to find acceptance, and so be cleared from the shadow of the past, with all the crippling feelings of guilt and self-hatred and despair that it can breed. To believe in God does not, indeed, mean to have ceased to be a sinner; it does mean to become a sinner who knows that he has been accepted by God, and is loved by him, and who in that all-important knowl-

edge is beginning to be released from the grip of his own sinfulness.

In the language of theology this is justification by faith. Of those who love God—that is, those who know and respond to God as love—Paul says that they are “also justified.” Sometimes this doctrine of justification is made to sound very dusty and dead; but when you see what it means the only difficulty is that it is almost *too good* to believe! For it means that you and I, with all our failures and weaknesses, and with everything of which we are ashamed, you and I are already loved and accepted by our Maker and included in His plan for creation, being as St. Paul says “called according to his purpose.” For to believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is to believe that God *has* accepted and *does* love even us as we now are.

Indeed the meaning of the cross of Christ is that God does not wait for us to become perfect before He accepts us as persons to be loved; but He has accepted us already, in order that we may eventually be made perfect and become able to respond fully to His love. As a matter of fact God would never love us if we had to be perfect first; for it is only the transforming effect of His love that can ever eventually make us perfect. But because He has accepted the petty and imperfect creatures that we are, there is now the glorious hope and promise, of which St. Paul speaks, that we shall finally be “conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.”

Think how creative and recreative this knowledge of God's love must be as it really grasps our minds and lives.

Accepted by God. Not condemned by Him, although there is so much in us that could be condemned; but accepted, loved, securely grasped and carried within the orbit of God's great ongoing purpose. People wear medals and hang up diplomas; but what diploma or medal or fame can compare with this fact of infinite significance: accepted by God? This is the inner knowledge which sets us free from the shadows of the past and the tyranny of our sinful nature. Under the sign of God's acceptance we need no longer see ourselves (as some of the Existentialist thinkers do) as aliens cast up on the frightening shores of an unknown land, or dreamers struggling in a frenzied nightmare; but rather as children in our Father's house. When we know that we are loved and accepted by God, we are free to love and accept our neighbor as ourselves; for he is a fellow child of the same heavenly Father. To the extent that we know ourselves to be accepted of God, we shall be set free from all that is represented in the New Testament by the devil and the demons, and from all that blocks us from that fullness of being which is eternal life.

And all that we must do or can do to possess this freedom is, in a famous phrase of Paul Tillich's, to accept acceptance, to accept the fact that, though unacceptable even to ourselves, we have been accepted by God. This acceptance does not wait to be earned or bought; it is already a reality, freely offered to us, and requiring only that we ourselves with our whole being accept God's acceptance and allow ourselves to be transformed by it.

The pledge of this is the cross of

Christ; for there we see God accepting humanity at the deepest point of human sin, which is the point of man's violent rejection of God himself in the person of his Son. To see the cross of Christ for what it is, is to find ourselves face to face with the God who has accepted us and reconciled us to himself, and who calls us to enter into a whole new world of personal relationships, based upon the healing power of reconciliation.

## II

So much in this context for the attitude to the past which flows from belief in God. This has already verged upon the attitude to the present moment. What does it mean to believe with St. Paul that "in everything God works for good with those who love him"—particularly when he goes on immediately to speak of "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword?" How does one who believes in God react to the pains and diseases, the hardships and disasters, the losses and failures, which are in different ways the lot of all mankind?

The New Testament teaches us (I believe) that God does not *send* these ills upon us. On the contrary, we see in Christ's healing work that these things are opposed to God's purpose. I cannot attempt to say anything now about *why* God has set us in a world in which such things can happen. But I want to suggest that when any of life's ills have come upon us there is a way of meeting them which helps to redeem the evil situation by compelling it to serve indirectly God's purpose of final good. None of life's calamities

is good in itself; and yet there is not one of them but can be forced to find a place in the unfolding of God's good purpose for us. The supreme revelation of this fact is, once again, the cross of Christ, which was the greatest evil that has ever happened turned into the greatest good, the murder of the Son of God made the occasion of man's salvation. St. Augustine was even moved to exclaim, *O felix culpa! O happy fault, to have merited such and so great a Redeemer!*

Evils, then, are not sent by God; and yet once they have come there is a way in which God wants us to meet them, the redemptive way revealed by Christ. For we can react to suffering in either of two ways. We can react in such a way that suffering becomes an occasion of bitterness and estrangement from God. Or we can react in such a way that we find within it a deeper awareness of God; so that even our moment of disaster or failure becomes a point on a road which leads us finally to God's presence.

One hesitates to say this when one is in good health and happiness, speaking from a well-built pulpit in a prosperous church in the richest country in the world. Only the man or the woman in the midst of calamity has the right to be heard when he says that good may be brought even out of direst evil. Let us listen, then, to the German pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as he wrote a letter from his prison cell in Nazi Germany before he was executed by the Gestapo in 1945. Imprisoned, cut off from those he loved, assaulted with fears, and with the smell of death about him, he wrote, "Of course not everything that hap-

pens is the will of God, yet in the last resort nothing happens without his will,—through every event, however untoward, there is always a way through to God." There is always a way through to God. And St. Paul was amongst as great trials and perils when he said, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

### III

Let me now turn, even more briefly and inadequately, to the attitude to the future which flows from belief in God. The theologians speak of Eschatology, the theology of the ultimate future,—meaning death, and the end of human history. The subject has often been shunned as morbid during the last two generations or so; but it seems that the catastrophic possibilities of the world today, with a lighted fuse smouldering in Berlin, are pressing Eschatology upon us again whether we like it or not. We are today closer to the situation in which the New Testament was written than any intervening generation has been. For the earliest Christians believed that the world might come to an end at any time, and they lived their lives in the consciousness of this possibility. But it did not lead them to despair or to folding their hands. The end of the world, when it came, would be God's end. And if civilization as we know it today should in our time be destroyed in an all-out thermonuclear exchange between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.—a thing which we all hope with all our hearts will not happen—even this would not be allowed finally to frustrate God's

purpose of good. I do not mean that thermonuclear war would not be a tragedy of almost infinite proportions and horror; or that we must not exert ourselves in every possible way to prevent it. I mean only that human self-destruction is not *impossible*, and that even a doomsday which must seem to us so final could not ultimately frustrate the purposes of Him who is the maker of heaven and earth and the Lord of all things visible and invisible.

This can only be because of what the New Testament speaks of as the resurrection of the dead. As St. Paul explains this in I Cor. 15, it very clearly does not mean the raising of dead bodies out of their graves. It has nothing to do with the resuscitation of corpses in a cemetery. It means the

divine recreation or reconstitution of the whole human personality, with both its inner and its outer aspects, in a way and in a sphere of being of which at present we know virtually nothing. The essential meaning of the resurrection of the dead for us now is that God's good purpose for his human creatures is not restricted by the fact of bodily death. His purposes far transcend the boundaries of human existence as we know it. St. Paul has said the last word which faith can speak when he said, "Neither death nor life, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

O God, grant to us to rejoice again in thy free forgiveness, and to accept one another as thou hast accepted us; help us to find thy purpose of good in all that befalls us; and to know that through all the varied experiences of our lives, both those we welcome and those we would have shunned, thou art leading us unto thyself; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

# OUR DUTY OF PRAISE

JOHN BISHOP

Psalm 34:1 "I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

ERIK ROUTLEY remarks that it cannot be an accident that the word for praise in any language is always a fine word for singing. Praise the Lord in French is *Louez Dieu*; in German, *Lobe den Herren*; in Latin, *Laudate Dominum*; in Greek, *Eul ogeite Theou*; and in Hebrew, *Hallelujah*. In every language all words for praise are words that it is impossible to sing badly. They are words of full vowels and strong consonants, words that exercise the muscles of the mouth and throat to their utmost. This cannot be an accident, for praise is the foundation of all hymnody, indeed of all singing.

In Scotland, all hymn singing is referred to as "praise," but the usage is older than that; for in the Hebrew the title of the Book of Psalms is "Praises" and the word there used is the one Hebrew word that every Christian knows, for it appears in the word *Hallelujah* (*hallelu*—praise; *jah*—the Lord).

In modern speech praise means little more than the opposite of blame: it signifies approval and the expression of approval. All enjoyment overflows into praise. Men spontaneously praise whatever they value. The praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment. Praising God is enjoying Him and sharing your joy with your neighbors. Praise is fundamental to re-

ligious life. That is why the Psalmist says, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

One of Wesley's preachers was Wyatt Andrews. When the usual question was asked at the Annual Conference in 1791, "Who have died this year?", the answer was given: "Wyatt Andrews who died full of faith. As long as he could ride, he travelled and while he had breath, he praised the Lord." That same year Wesley himself died. The day before his death, he expressed a wish to get up. While his clothes were being brought, he broke out singing with such vigor that all his friends were astonished. He sang Isaac Watts' hymn, "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath, and when my voice is lost in death, praise shall employ my nobler powers." The next morning he tried to sing it again but he was too feeble. All he could say was "I'll praise—I'll praise."

I like that word "continually" in this verse of the Psalm. Against continual praise, no gloom can triumph, no difficulty can be too great. We must not imagine that for such men as Wesley and Andrews every day broke clear—far from it. They had their experiences of difficulty, of darkness, of indecision. They were not exempt from the trials of life but they had a secret. Those who have set praise at the center

of life in this century have found it the same tremendous thing. I think of Hanns Lilje, Bishop of Hanover. For his fearless Christian faith he was made a prisoner of Hitler and he has recorded his prison experiences in a moving book, *The Valley of the Shadow*. They placed fetters on him at night—chains from wrists to ankles—removing them in the day time. But no shackles were a match for his faith and his praise. How could they be? Once he heard a prisoner whistling far down the cell block, "O for a thousand tongues to sing." At once Lilje rushed to the bars of his cell and with all his breath he whistled the same tune. True praise has its rise deeper down than circumstance. It is centered in the nature of God himself, shown in the order and beauty of the world, the history of mankind and in the revelation of his inmost heart. Come what may in this changeful life, God is continually worthy of praise. Is your witness growing weak? Is your prayer unreal? Try praise. "He who does not praise God here on earth, shall in eternity be dumb." If praise is to be at all times, it must be a function of the Christian's whole life. Horatius Bonar expresses it like this in one of his fine hymns:

Fill Thou my life, O lord my God,  
In every part with praise,  
That my whole being may proclaim  
Thy being and Thy ways.

Not for the lip of praise alone  
Nor e'en the praising heart  
I ask, but for a life made up  
Of praise in every part.

Praise in the common things of life,  
Its goings out and in,  
Praise in each duty and each deed,  
However small and mean.

"Whatsoever ye do" says St. Paul, "do all to the glory of God." No vocal praise in the congregation can be truly sincere unless it springs from a life which has praise in every part of it. On the other hand, no praise-laden life can reach its highest development in solitary praise. Companionship in praise strengthens and deepens it. Praise includes thankfulness, but is something greater: We thank God for what he has done for us, but we praise him for what he is in himself. Praise is the very heart of religion. It is the happy rapturous response of the awakened soul to the love of God. "If God be like Jesus," said A. B. Bruce, "the world has cause to be glad." No one who knows Jesus is exempt from the duty or deprived of the privilege of praise. Praise should be a part of our daily life and of our common worship. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord," says the Psalmist. Why? Because praise is the purpose of creation. It is the means of drawing near to the One who loved us into life.

The organ voluntaries, the hymns, and the anthems are not just incidental; not meant merely to lend variety to the spoken portions of the service. They are not simply opening exercises preliminary to the sermon. To be sure the Holy Spirit takes the words of the preacher and uses them to bring Christ to the soul. Christ meets us through Scripture, prayer, and sermon. But he also meets us in our praise as we reach out towards him. "It is a good thing

to sing praises unto the Lord." Not only a good thing but a thing that does us good. To lose ourselves in a great hymn of praise; to lift our minds above the barriers that divide us on the lower level and unite them in adoration—that is the best of all medicines for the soul. Nothing in all this world will do you so much good as that. People spend millions of dollars every year looking for the mental health that only living worship can give them.

Whenever you get to the heart of religion, you find a song. The Church of Christ has come singing down the ages. As Percy Ainsworth says: "If the Church is the bride of Christ, the hymnbook is its love-story." None of the other great religions of the world is set to music like the Bible. The Bible abounds with music because its theme is a mighty deliverance. After the overthrow of Pharaoh's tyranny, Moses burst into song. Then his sister Miriam led forth the women with dance and timbrel, singing, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously." The Psalms are the hymnbook of Israel. The music of the Old Testament passed over to the early Church with certain variations of a Christian character. The coming of Christ was welcomed by a veritable symphony of song. Zacharias sings the Benedictus when John the Baptist is born; Mary sings the Magnificat at the coming of her Son; the heavenly host sing "Glory to God in the highest" and the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God. The aged Simeon takes up their song in the Temple as he sings, "Now, Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." Praise spreads like a wave. When the prodigal returned home, nothing less would

do but music and dancing. The multitudes took up the song on Palm Sunday and our Lord himself sang a hymn with his disciples before leaving the upper room. Think of the words he sang in that dreadful moment: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever. With the Lord on my side, I do not fear. What can man do unto me?"

Christian song has spread over the earth. "Praising we plough and singing we sail," cried one of the early Church Fathers. Wherever religion is, that is its spirit. It was the Reformers who allowed the people to sing; with them congregational singing came into its own again and who can doubt that worship gained greatly from the change. In England, Watts and the Wesleys set the people singing. There is an interesting entry in John Wesley's Journal for Good Friday, 1882, when he preached at Macclesfield. In the afternoon while they were administering the sacrament he writes, "I heard a low, soft, solemn sound, just like that of an Aeolian harp. It continued six or seven minutes and so affected many that they could not refrain from tears. It then gradually died away. Strange that no other organist (that I know) should think of this."

What a picture of the founder of the Methodist Church admitting that he was moved at a Communion Service by the skillful and reverent playing of the organist! Sir Walford Davies once said that there is no better advice on congregational singing than Wesley gave. Here it is: "Sing all. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find it a blessing.

Sing lustily and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep, but lift up your voice with strength. Sing modestly. Strive to unite your voices together so as to make one clear melodious sound. Sing in time and take care not to sing too slow. Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Attend strictly to the sense of what you sing and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually."

We need more of that spirit of enthusiasm in all our worship, but we cannot manufacture it and God forbid that we should try to put it on from the outside. It can only come as we open our hearts to God and as he fills every part of us with praise. J. P. Struthers, a minister in Greenock, Scotland, was always deeply interested in and proud of his congregational singing. There was no instrument to lead the music but all the members had been well trained and the parts were fully sustained all over the Church. He used

to say to his people, "Let our singing be so sweet and musical that the passer-by on the street will be compelled to stop and say: 'Hush, it is the song of the redeemed.'"

All those who have found Christ are compelled to sing his praises. Do you remember how John Bunyan's pilgrim, when his burden rolled away at the foot of the Cross, "gave three leaps for joy and went out singing"? And when he comes to the end of his pilgrimage, Bunyan can hardly bring in enough music to welcome him to the Celestial City. "There came out to meet him several of the king's trumpeters who with melodious noises and loud, made even the heavens to echo with their sound." Let us seek to offer living worship not only whenever we meet in God's house but in the daily round and the common task, so that no part of the day or night may be free from praise. So shall we be able to say with the Psalmist: "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

# PROTESTANT CLERGYMEN AND AMERICAN DESTINY

## I. PROMISE AND JUDGMENT, 1781-1800

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AMERICANS in "search" for the "goals," "prospects," and "purpose" of the United States share an interest in the latter part of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> This was the "age of the democratic revolution"<sup>2</sup> in Western civilization which produced the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, those primary and permanent legacies paramount to our national existence. Although remote in time this period is the common experience of Americans because our lives are still regulated by the political instruments it produced. Indeed, recently, a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind," past and present, as well as some patriotic compulsiveness, has turned us toward the Founding Fathers. We have begun projects to publish the papers of the "major" prophets, even to print all documents which have to do with the ratification of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. This filial piety does not

seem out of place since the wisdom—or lack of it—of those who pledged to each other their "lives," "fortunes," and "sacred honor," has shaped American destiny.

Protestant clergymen of the last decades of the century may be considered as "minor" Founding Fathers. They presided over American education, taught moral philosophy in colleges, and helped to make an American consensus as preachers who were also men of the world. Professors Alice Baldwin, Clinton Rossiter, Merle Curti, Hans Kohn, Ralph Gabriel, H. Richard Niebuhr, Perry Miller, Sidney Mead, among others, have paid particular attention to these public figures.<sup>3</sup> In a paper as brief as this

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Huston Smith (ed.), *The Search for America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 176; *Goals for Americans* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 372; *Prospect for America* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 486; *The National Purpose* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 534.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Alice Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1928), pp. 222; Clinton Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1953), p. 558; Merle Curti, *The Roots of American Loyalty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), p. 267; Ralph Gabriel, *The Course of American Democratic Thought*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1956), p. 508; Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 735; H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (Chicago: Willett, Clark Y Company, 1937), p. 215; Perry Miller, "From the Covenant to the Revival," *The Shaping of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 322-

must be, only a word may be spared to suggest the social complexity of the period and the danger of hasty generalization about a group in which there was much diversity of opinion. The group of clergymen, numerically dominant and most articulate, represented a confluence of Protestant Christian and Enlightenment ideas,<sup>4</sup> or, as Karl Barth has dubbed the mixture, a Calvinism, but a Calvinism gone to seed<sup>5</sup> among Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, and Reformed Dutch. It is the purpose of this paper to analyze two dominant themes of a "providential dialectic"<sup>6</sup>—promise and judgment—as they appear in the private and public statements of these clergymen. Heretofore, the themes have not been analyzed with regard to particular developments in theology and politics immediately following the Revolutionary War. The predominance of these themes suggest conclusively that the clergy thought within the framework of a covenant relationship with God and that these were for them essential ingredients of America's national destiny.

## I

Protestant clergy made an inseparable connection between America's

368; Sidney Mead, "American Protestantism during the Revolutionary Epoch," *Church History* xxii (December, 1953), 4, pp. 279-297.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Leon Howard, "The Late Eighteenth Century: An Age of Contradictions," in Harry Hayden Clark (ed.), *Transitions in American Literary History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1954), pp. 51-89.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl*, trs. Brian Cozens (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Miller, *op.cit.*, p. 325.

privileged place in history and national responsibility. Their minds were stretched by "extended views"<sup>7</sup> of empire and of the role of the United States as God's "American Israel."<sup>8</sup> After hostilities in 1781, the clergymen praised God for bringing good out of evil, for America's emergence as an independent nation. God had preserved and prepared America to be a "theatre"<sup>9</sup> for great events. The clergy were particularly impressed by geographical and demographical potentials. Some measured the "Western Empire"<sup>10</sup> to extend to the Pacific, to sustain forty-eight to sixty millions of people in a hundred years,<sup>11</sup> to produce a superior

<sup>7</sup> Samuel Cooper, *A Sermon* (Boston: T. and J. Fleet, and J. Gill, 1780), pp. 52-53.

<sup>8</sup> This expression was used in thanksgiving sermons after the Revolutionary War. Cf. Rozel Cook, *A Sermon* (New London: Timothy Green, 1784), p. 17; George Duffield, *A Sermon* (Philadelphia: F. Bailey, 1784), p. 5; Ezra Stiles, *The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor* (Worcester: Isaiah Thomas, 1785), p. 36; John Rodgers, *The Divine Goodness Displayed, in the American Revolution* (New York: Samuel Loudon, 1784), pp. 3-4; Samuel McCorkle, Ms. Sermon, July 4, 1786, Duke University Library.

<sup>9</sup> *Minutes of the Warren Association . . . September 7, 8, 1784* (n.p., n.d.), p. 7; Oliver Hart, *America's Remembrancer* (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1791), pp. 4-6.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel West, *A Sermon* (Boston: Adams and Nourse, 1786), p. 31; cf. also Loren Baritz, "The Idea of the West," *The American Historical Review*, LXVI (April, 1961), 3, pp. 618-640.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Thomas Brockway, *America Saved, or Divine Glory Displayed* (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1784), p. 23; Varnum Lansing Collins, *President Witherspoon*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925), II, pp. 191-192; John Lathrop, *A Discourse on the Peace* (Boston: Peter Edes, 1784), p. 29; Bishop James Madison to James Madison, March 1, 1789, Papers of

order of beings, a "continued race of heroes," of Lockes, Newtons, Washingtons, and achievements greater than the empires of Greece and Rome. The United States was already a "monument" more grand than "mausoleums, pyramids, or triumphal arches,"<sup>12</sup> still America's privilege was conditioned by God's universal promise for man. The clergy saw God as the active agent of history and America as God's eighteenth-century Israel, an empire-servant to bless all mankind.

God brought the United States into existence at a propitious time in history. Clergymen often identified America with ancient Israel, so profound was the mark of the Old Testament and so profuse were the thought patterns of Puritans (i.e., "Mount *Sion* in a Wilderness") in the early national period. God's American Israel faced not backward, however, but in the direction of the future coming of the kingdom of God.<sup>13</sup> This orientation, drawing upon New Testament symbols, served to make the identification of America with Israel actual rather

than analogical. It was during this period that the amplified awakening sermons of Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, compelled widespread attention. After publication in England prior to the Revolution, his "great Work," an "uncompleted summa,"<sup>14</sup> appeared in America in 1782, 1786, 1792, and 1793. The 1786 edition boasted over five hundred subscribers, while that of 1793 was presented as incentive for Americans to "quicken" their "exertions" to complete God's work throughout the world.<sup>15</sup> The circulation of this volume in the post-war era suggests that Americans were not touched decisively by the historical scepticism implicit in Voltaire, Gibbons, and Hume. They were influenced by a conception of universal history, the center and significance of which is Jesus Christ. Edwards' historical perspective differed, in part, from that of Bossuet's modified Augustinianism in a *Discourse on Universal History* (1681)<sup>16</sup> by a substitution of Protestantism for Roman Catholicism as the culminating instrument of God's purposes. At the same time, encouraged by Edwards'

James Madison, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. David Osgood, *A Sermon* (Boston: Benjamin Russell, 1788), p. 18; Asa Burton, *A Discourse* (Rutland: 1795), p. 17; Samuel McClintock, *A Sermon* (Portsmouth: Robert Gerrish, 1784), p. 27; Moses Hemmenway, *A Sermon* (Boston: Benjamin Edes and Sons, 1784), p. 46; William Rogers, *An Oration* (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1789), p. 10; Samuel Parker, *A Sermon* (Boston; Thomas Adams, 1793), p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. George Huntston Williams, "The Wilderness and Paradise in the History of the Church," *Church History*, xxviii (March, 1959), 1, pp. 3-24; Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 244.

<sup>14</sup> Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1949), pp. 307, 285.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. particularly, Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption* (New York: Shepard Kollock, 1786), p. 402; Jonathan Edwards, *History of Redemption, on a Plan Entirely Original* (New York: T. and J. Swords, 1793), p. 573. David Austin, Presbyterian clergyman of Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, published this last edition with his own historical, critical and theological notes.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Karl Lowith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 137f.

own post-millennial leanings,<sup>17</sup> clergymen produced a crop of speculation about the fulfillment of Biblical prophecies as recorded especially in Daniel and Revelation. Stellar millenarians included Samuel Hopkins, William Linn, David Austin, Elhanan Winchester, the latter complimented by Benjamin Rush as America's "Theological Newton" for his analysis of the "Prophecies that remain to be fulfilled."<sup>18</sup> These men were certain that they were preparing for the "glory of the latter day."<sup>19</sup> The millennium, a "Middle State"<sup>20</sup> of human felicity to be achieved before the final coming of Christ, was, in spite of some variation in calculations, approximately two hundred years away.<sup>21</sup> This orientation toward "heaven's last wondrous acts"<sup>22</sup> heightened the expansiveness and expectancy of the years as clergymen externalized and universalized the promise of God's American Israel.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. C. C. Goen, "Jonathan Edwards: A New Departure in Eschatology," *Church History*, xxviii (March, 1959), i, pp. 25-40.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Samuel Hopkins, *A Treatise on the Millennium* (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1793), p. 158; William Linn, *Discourses on the Signs of the Times* (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1794), p. 200; David Austin, *The Millennium* (Elizabeth Town: Shepard Kollock, 1794), pp. 426; Elhanan Winchester, *A Course of Lectures on the Prophecies that remain to be Fulfilled*, 3 vols. (London: R. Hawes, 1788, 1789, 1790); Benjamin Rush to Elizabeth G. Ferguson, January 18, 1793, *Letters of Benjamin Rush*, ed. L. H. Butterfield, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), II, p. 628.

<sup>19</sup> John Woodhull, *A Sermon* (Trenton: Isaac Collins, 1790), p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> Winchester, *op.cit.*, II, pp. 369-370.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Hopkins, *op.cit.*, p. 98; Linn, *op.cit.*, pp. 170-171; Austin, *op.cit.*, pp. 394-395.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Stillman, *An Oration* (Boston: B. Edes and Son, 1789), p. 29.

America's responsible servanthood was analyzed principally in terms of the Revolutionary War because of God's vindication of justice, one feature of the coming millennium. The birth of a nation "in a day"<sup>23</sup> was a principal link in the "grand chain of Providence," contiguous with the past, but with its own unique place in history.<sup>24</sup> Clergymen, the "black regiment" of the war, celebrated principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence and America's deliverance from bondage under Britain. The victory of the American David over the British Goliath<sup>25</sup> was occasionally employed as an apologetic shot against deists for whom God had expired in an abstraction of the first cause.<sup>26</sup> Clergymen also recognized God's guiding hand in the first uncertain years of the nation, under the Articles of Confederation (a "meer shadow without any substance" according to Baptist James Manning, Congressional representative from Rhode Island),<sup>27</sup> the Shays' Rebellion, and the making and ratification of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

While no man of the cloth participated in the Constitutional Convention,

<sup>23</sup> Daniel Foster, *A Sermon* (Boston: Thomas Adams, 1790), p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> David Tappan, *A Discourse* (Salem: Samuel Hall, 1783), pp. 12-13.

<sup>25</sup> Samuel McClintock, *A Sermon* (Portsmouth: Robert Gerrish, 1784), p. 19.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Thomas Brockway, *America Saved, or Divine Glory Displayed* (Hartford; Hudson and Goodwin, 1784), p. 12; Tappan, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-8; George Duffield, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-4; Robert Smith, *The Obligations of the Confederate States of North America to Praise God* (Philadelphia: Francis Bailie, 1783), p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> James Manning and Nathan Miller to the Governor of Rhode Island, September 28, 1786, Rhode Island State Archives.

the clergy agonized over the problems of a free government. Thirty-six of the forty-six clergymen who attended state ratifying conventions voted in favor of accepting the document.<sup>28</sup> The Constitution was the "cap-stone" of revolution, a rare privilege, a confirmation of the fact that government should and could be by the consent of the governed. It was an achievement of deliberation, not of chance or force, based upon a principal consonant with revelation, reason, and experience, the limitation of all arbitrary power, personal and corporate, civil and ecclesiastical.<sup>29</sup> According to the clergy, such limitation pointed beyond the Constitution to God, the meta-political reality who ordains government and who is the sovereign but not arbitrary source of all power, and to the common good of man, who is corrupt enough to make such limitation necessary (Westminster Confession, xxiii). The achievement, however, was not a symbol to be venerated but an instrument for change.<sup>30</sup> While it was not a perfect

instrument, among its recommendations was the possibility of amendment should it prove unsatisfactory to match human need.<sup>31</sup> Clergymen assisted in the establishment of a methodology of perpetual and peaceful revolution, an example of the proper method of arriving at a larger degree of justice among all men. They generalized ecstatically that the contribution of America to the world was a "civil and religious liberty," embodied in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights (1791). America, according to the clergymen, was the "one last retreat for man," a refuge from the injustices of the tyrannical alliance between "lazy priests and luxurious princes of Europe."<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, in the gracious providence of God, the "consequence of American independence" would "reach to the extremities of the world."<sup>33</sup>

Exegeting the Bible as a "sacred Calendar," preachers often victimized themselves in tortured attempts to chronicle the prophecies which ancestors had already fulfilled.<sup>34</sup> Moreover,

*Science Review*, xxx (December, 1936), 6, pp. 1071-1085; also, Smylie, *op.cit.*, pp. 242-249.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. James Dana, Ms. Sermon (n.d.), Rare Book Room, Sterling Library, Yale University.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. e.g., David Osgood, *A Sermon* (Boston: Benjamin, Russell, 1788), p. 8; William Linn, *The Blessings of America* (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1791), pp. 20-21; Samuel E. McCorkle, *A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States of America* (Halifax: Abraham Hodge, 1795), pp. 31-32.

<sup>33</sup> Jonathan Maxcey, *An Oration* (Providence: Carter and Wilkinson, 1795), pp. 19-20.

<sup>34</sup> Austin, *op.cit.*, p. iii.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. James H. Smylie, *American Clergymen and the Constitution of the United States of America, 1781-1796* (Typed Th.D. Dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary), pp. 176-181; also Forrest McDonald, *We the People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 436.

<sup>29</sup> Aaron Hall, *An Oration* (Keene: James D. Griffith, 1788), pp. 6-7; Cf. Enos Hitchcock, *An Oration* (Providence: Bennett, Wheeler, 1788), pp. 9, 12; William Rogers, *An Oration* (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1789), pp. 16-17.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Samuel Stillman at the Massachusetts ratifying convention, Jonathan Elliot (ed.), *The Debates in the Several State Conventions*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1836), II, p. 174; Edward S. Corwin, "The Constitution as Instrument and as Symbol," *The American Political*

they observed the signs of their own times with ingenuity. They lived in God's "age of revolution," not Paine's "age of reason,"<sup>35</sup> and they forced revolution to fit prophecy which heralded the millennium. The French Revolution marked a continuation of the American conflict, the beginning of the end of political and ecclesiastical tyranny, and, what is crucial, the downfall of the "beast," the Roman Catholic Church. When revolutionists turned to regicide and the reign of terror in 1793, clerics paused. Some were repulsed to the extent of sympathizing with Catholics when the cult of reason secularized nationalism. Others, with the infinite sophistry of millennial soothsayers, suggested that God was using strenuous means to root out tremendous evil.<sup>36</sup> In spite of confusing elements in the actual course of events, clergymen pictured America's emergence as part of universal history fast approaching its climax, with Protestantism as the world's regenerative and redemptive leaven, and with a political instrument designed for the realization of social justice among all men.

## II

Judgment was the concomitant of promise. After victory clergymen did

<sup>35</sup> James Muir, *An Examination of the Principles contained in the Age of Reason* (Baltimore: S. & J. Adams, 1795), pp. 115-116.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Stillman, *Thoughts on the French Revolution* (Boston: Manning & Loring, 1795), p. 27; Samuel Miller, *A Sermon* (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1793), p. 29; Austin, *op.cit.*, pp. 331, 400-401; also, Charles Downer Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1897), p. 315.

not preach a "Christian utopianism" so "extravagant," as Perry Miller would have us believe, that they obliterated shadows on the nation's future.<sup>37</sup> Millennial thought itself requires judgment, Miller has also observed in his comments on Edwards,<sup>38</sup> even though in the undemythologized eschatology of the clergy it might be judgment deferred. As Israel had been accountable for its privilege as God's elect, so in the eighteenth century, clergymen expected America to make its privileges a "benefit to the world."<sup>39</sup> Believing that the God of history was also the God of nature, with a small "n," some clergymen warned that Americans had been given occasions for self-examination. God actuated nature by sending Hessian flies, a whirlwind that ripped through New England, and yellow fever which drove Philadelphia, the national capital, to panic in 1793.<sup>40</sup> The clergy tried to fix upon the American conscience a sense of the accountability of individuals and the nation to God.

<sup>37</sup> Perry Miller, "From the Covenant to the Revival," *op.cit.*, p. 351.

<sup>38</sup> Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, *op.cit.*, p. 329.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Price, *Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution, and The Means of Making it a Benefit to the World* (London: Printed; Trenton: Reprinted by Isaac Collins, 1785), p. 87. Price's observations were also published in Boston, Bennington, New Haven, and Philadelphia.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. James Muir, *op.cit.*, pp. 151-152; *The Prophet Nathan* (Hudson: Ashbel Stoddard, 1788), p. 30; *The Connecticut Courant and Weekly Intelligencer*, September 3, 1787; John Mitchel Mason, *A Sermon* (New York: Samuel Loudon & Son, 1793), p. 64; also, J. H. Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), p. 304.

From pulpits and in pamphlets, preachers declared that the destiny of the nation could not be considered apart from individual citizens responsible for participating in its life. God holds individuals accountable for their public duties. American destiny might be wrapped up in a Constitution which neatly balanced the "jarring interests of society," but the just administration of government did not depend so much upon the excellence of a paper parchment as upon the integrity of men.<sup>41</sup> By mathematical necessity, according to one imaginative clergyman, republican government required more virtue and less vice than any other type because of the involvement of a greater number of people in its processes.<sup>42</sup> The virtuous life, as a test of loyalty to the nation, was defined as the public and not simply the private good of man. As Bishop James Madison put it, however, God, not the "changeable ideas of the political moralists, or the caprice of the wisest of human legislators," provided the ultimate obligation and sanction upon the virtue of republican man.<sup>43</sup>

God was the "Authority over the authorities."<sup>44</sup> The clergy sometimes referred to the civil magistrate as

"gods," and, accepting the role of the people in government, they cautiously maintained that the voice of the citizen might express the voice of God. They reminded both civil magistrate and the citizen that they would die like men and be judged.<sup>45</sup> God, through the "king of terrors," "intrudes into palaces as well as cottages" to bring all human affairs to account.<sup>46</sup> Debate about the significance of this accounting agitated the theological circuit. Universalists, extending their influence, had an eye on the restoration of all things in Christ, and, with some differences among themselves, believed that God's benevolence was sufficient motivation for public morality. Ideas of rationalist Charles Chauncy and evangelical universalists, John Murray and Elhanan Winchester, were opposed as a menace to public safety by others, among them, Isaac Backus, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., Robert Annan, Thomas Reese, and David Caldwell.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Psalm 82:6.

<sup>46</sup> Samuel Davies, *Sermons on Important Subjects*, 5th ed., 3 vols. (New York: T. Allen, 1792), III, p. 345. Cf. also sermons concerning the death of Washington, e.g., Benjamin Trumbull, *The Majesty and Mortality of Created Gods* (New Haven: Read & Morse, 1800), p. 31.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Richard Eddy, *Universalism in America*, 2 vols. (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1886); Charles Chauncy, *Salvation for All Men* (Boston: T. and J. Fleet, 1782), p. 26, and *The Mystery Hid from Ages and Generations, made manifest by the Gospel-Revelation; or, The Salvation of All Men the Grand Thing Aimed at in the Scheme of God* (London: C. Dilly, 1784), p. 406. The following items deal with Universalism in terms of public morality: Isaac Backus, *The Doctrine of Universal Salvation Examined and Refuted* (Providence: John Carter, 1782), p. 40; Jonathan Edwards, Jr., *The Necessity of the Belief of Christianity*

<sup>41</sup> Charles Backus, *A Sermon* (Springfield: Weld & Thomas, 1788), p. 11. Cf. also, e.g., Samuel Langdon, *The Republic of the Israelites An Example to the American States* (Exeter: Lamson and Ranlet, 1788), p. 29.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Nisbet, Ms. Letter (n.d.), Autograph Collection of Simon Gratz, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

<sup>43</sup> Bishop James Madison, *Manifestations of the Beneficence of Divine Providence Towards America* (Richmond: Thomas Nicolson, 1795), pp. 18-19.

<sup>44</sup> *Religion and American Society* (The Fund for the Republic, Inc., 1961), p. 30.

These men were possessed by a more sober view of human unrighteousness and a more somber image of God's wrath, even though some of them multiplied the population of heaven by projecting a vast harvest of souls during the millennium.<sup>48</sup> But the immediate danger of universalism was to undercut any sense of urgency among the people of an infant republic to do justly. By whom, for example, in a land of religious liberty would a man swear in taking an oath to uphold the law, by "Jupiter, Minerva, Proserpine, or Pluto,"<sup>49</sup> or by God who would separate the sheep from the goats at the last judgment? Not all men will share the happiness of the latter day! In pontificating about judgment with a logic which aped omniscience, clerics who insisted that retribution was a post-death possibility often robbed God of his sovereignty and graciousness in Jesus Christ and took it upon themselves to manipulate anxiety. Discussion about judgment, however, was heated as clergymen tried to determine the nature of that individualized and interiorized sense of responsibility

by the Citizens of the State in Order to our Political Prosperity (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1794) p. 47; Robert Annan, *Brief Animadversions on the Doctrine of Universal Salvation* (Philadelphia: R. Aitken & Son, 1787), p. 55; Thomas Reese, *An Essay on the Influence of Religion in Civil Society* (Charleston: Markland & M'Iver, 1788), p. 32; David Caldwell, "The Doctrine of Universal Salvation Unscriptural," in E. W. Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell* (Greensborough: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842), pp. 285-302.

<sup>48</sup> Goen, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>49</sup> Baptist Henry Abbot at the North Carolina ratifying convention, in Elliot, *op.cit.*, iv, pp. 195-196.

which the perils of republican nationhood demanded.

Furthermore, it was an "immutable maxim" that righteousness exalts a nation while sin is a reproach to a people.<sup>50</sup> This was an incessant refrain in clerical utterances as they assumed a corporate responsibility in republican society, grounded in a common deliverance as well as upon a deliberated Constitution. Divine "nemesis"<sup>51</sup> never misses its way. Empires die, indeed, may even bear within themselves without heed the cancer of their own dissolution. The God who made America a "wonder and envy" of nations might use America in another way as a monument of what an impious and ungrateful people should expect from God's hand.<sup>52</sup> Among the various evils of a republic which might bring national calamities—and they were considerable—hypocrisy was a vexing problem to some clergymen. The American Revolution was fought for the sake of the "vague universalism"<sup>53</sup> of classical political thought—strained through seventeenth century theorists, e.g., John Locke, and the American's own colonial experience—the equality of all men before the law and the rights of man to life, liberty and property.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Proverbs 14:34; Samuel West, *A Sermon* (Boston: Samuel Etheridge, 1795), p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> John Murray, *Jerubbaal, or Tyranny's Grove Destroyed, and the Altar of Liberty Finished* (Newbury-Port: John Mycall, 1784), p. 60.

<sup>52</sup> Reese, *op.cit.*, p. 86; cf. also, Andrew Hunter, Ms. Sermon, preached January 5, 1788, October 6, 1793, November, 1795, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary.

<sup>53</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Structure of Nations and Empires* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 182f.

Clergymen owned these as Christian and as corroborated by revelation. But Americans, whom God had delivered from "slavery," kept the Negro in bonds. Negro slavery was an embarrassing particularity exposing American inconsistency. The Constitutional Convention made several compromises to insure national unity, among them being a twenty-year curb on the power of Congress to prohibit the importation of slaves. This oppressive provision in the original compact of the people, contrary to the justification of their own deliverance, did not make for perfect union. It did not prevent dissent among the clergy who saw a compromise in principle and who accepted responsibility to correct injustice. Delegates to ecclesiastical assemblies often confronted the problem of denominational unity. Nevertheless, Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists condemned slavery and adopted pronouncements favoring immediate or, at least, gradual emancipation to allow time for educating the Negro to responsible citizenship.<sup>54</sup> Irritants Samuel Hopkins, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., Samuel Miller, David Rice, John Leland, David Barrow, among others, prevented Americans from taking ease in an American Zion.<sup>55</sup> Hopkins, for

example, whose anti-slavery propaganda was constant, supported the ratification of the Constitution to preserve the nation. He deplored the slavery compromise as an "Achan." Eventually, he wrote, the "Supreme Ruler of the universe" will "vindicate [the] oppressed and break [the] arm of [the] oppressor in his own way and time; and cause [the] wrath of man to praise him."<sup>56</sup> The growth of anti-slavery sentiment and societies during these years suggests that some clergymen were willing to accept the full implication of American nationhood as color-blindness excluding bondage, to extirpate a "heaven-daring wickedness" and to avoid this controversy God had with America.<sup>57</sup>

Certain aspects of American life tended to soften the threat of judgment. From the beginning, for example, the victory of American arms had the effect of completely justifying the American cause in a war, aspects of which had been seen by some as judgment. Furthermore, clerics were anxious about the irreligion of the post-war period, the "anythingarians" and the "nothingarians," the possibility that America, threatened by the conspiracy of an "Infidel International" (Sidney Mead's term), might produce a "new race" of pagans.<sup>58</sup> However, that warn-

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Smylie, *op.cit.*, pp. 371-376.

<sup>55</sup> Samuel Hopkins, *A Discourse upon the Slave-Trade, and the Slavery of Africans* (Providence: J. Carter, 1793), p. 22; Jonathan Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave Trade* (New Haven: Thomas and Samuel Green, 1791), p. 37; Samuel Miller, *A Sermon* (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1793), p. 27; David Rice, *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy* (Philadelphia: 1792; London: M. Gurney, 1793), p. 24; Robert Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in*

*Virginia* (Richmond: John O'Lynch, 1810), p. 79; [David Barrow], *Circular Letter . . . 1798* (Norfolk: Willett & O'Connor, n.d.), p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Samuel Hopkins to Moses Brown, October 22, 1787, Moses Brown Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *Minutes of the Warren Association* (Boston: John W. Allen, 1787), p. 5; Rice, *op.cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>58</sup> Charles Nisbet to Charles Wallace, October 31, 1797, Manuscript Division, New

ings of judgment (no mere rhetorical device to clergymen) fell upon deaf ears was because of hardness of heart, not because clergymen believed God had abandoned sovereign control over his empire-servant on which he had bestowed "blessings."<sup>59</sup> Clerics made an "intimate connection between national welfare and the life of the individual," to use Hans Kohn's words about a positive aspect of American nationalism.<sup>60</sup> And they set about to establish the fear of God within the heart, to impress upon rulers and ruled that they were "equally accountable"<sup>61</sup> for their public as well as their private lives. Citizens of the new nation would be confronted continually with challenges and choices to faithfulness. Clergymen reminded them, e.g., in Fourth of July sermons, that God brought the nation into existence and expected the benefits of free government to be employed to bless all mankind, including, according to some, the American Negro. Men and nations reap what they sow and God rewards and punishes those who fail to keep his commandments, even though his logic may elude. Man may postpone judgment and compound guilt. He cannot escape. God remains the ultimate arbi-

ter of human existence, personal and national.

This analysis highlights several aspects of American nationhood. Among the clergy, of course, there were those who had reservations about the promise of American life. Scottish immigrant Charles Nisbet, first President of Dickinson College, grumbled with some acidity as he observed the "locomotive" tendency among "liberty-mad" "Tartars" on the Pennsylvania frontier that the American did not have virtue enough to govern himself and that the union would not last long.<sup>62</sup> If, however, we accept some of the marks of modern nationalism proposed by historian Carlton Hayes,<sup>63</sup> clergymen on the whole helped to overcome parochialism and promote a national consciousness. With exceptions they spoke a common language. They gave citizens a sense of continuity with their political past through their preachments. Jedidiah Morse, through his *American Geography* (1789), and Jeremy Belknap, through his *American Biographies* (Vol. I, 1794), stimulated loyalty to place and people. Beyond this, immediately after war, the clergy proceeded to tighten the "continental

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York Public Library; *An Address from the Presbytery of New-Castle to the Congregations under their Care* (Wilmington: James Adams, 1785), p. 12; Vernon Stauffer, *New England and the Bavarian Illuminati* (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1918), p. 374.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. William Linn, *The Blessings of America*, *op.cit.*; Jedidiah Morse, *The Present Situation of Other Nations of the World, contrasted with our own* (Boston: Samuel Hall, 1795), p. 37.

<sup>60</sup> Hans Kohn, *op.cit.*, p. 263.

<sup>61</sup> Samuel Miller, *op.cit.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>62</sup> Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, January 26, 1786, October 21, 1786, November 5, 1790, all in the Darlington Memorial Library, University of Pittsburgh; Charles Nisbet to Charles Wallace, September 2, 1790, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library. Cf. E. P. Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), p. 256.

<sup>63</sup> Hayes emphasizes the importance of a common language and historical traditions, e.g., religious, territorial, political, economic, and cultural. Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Nationalism: A Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 187.

belt" (Paine's phrase) by organizing national denominational bodies. They went further. They discussed the possibility of overcoming ecclesiastical division for the sake of national as well as Christian unity.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, representing the dominance of Protestantism in American life, clergymen created a tension between promise and judgment which marked our early national mentality.

Clergymen assisted in establishing America's identity as a nation, God's empire-servant, a land of great privilege and responsibility, at, what they believed to be, an auspicious time in universal history. America, according to Turgot's dictum, was the "hope of the human race." Themes described in this paper help to explain the feverish activity of Protestants to revive, to reform, to evangelize, to educate not only America but the whole world. Moreover, they throw light on critical problems which have not yet been resolved. In extending the privilege of America, on the one hand, to the oppressed of Europe, Protestant clergymen confounded their own prediction. The Catholic swarmed from Europe. He "kept the faith" for the most part among a hostile people and gradually emerged to challenge the predominant religious orientation of the nation. This failure of prophecy concerning the tribulation of "Anti-Christ" and the triumph of Protestantism aggravated the so-called "native American" and perpetuated one of the deepest prejudices in the American grain. On the

other hand, the constitutional instrument of which the clergy were proud and through which the nation was to serve the oppressed of the world, did not provide the method by which Americans could absorb the dispossessed Negro as a citizen. The "American dilemma," spotted by clergymen in the beginning, troubled the nation until the judgments of God, to employ Biblical words from Lincoln's second inaugural, proved "true and righteous altogether." Another aspect of American nationalism has plagued Protestants particularly. Americans recognized a distinction between the function of the civil magistrate and ecclesiastical institutions which were responsible for preaching the word, administering the sacraments, and exercising discipline within the body of Christ. Indeed, the provision for "religious liberty" was considered one of the great achievements of the American constitutional system. But the tendency to identify the United States with Israel, instead of with the Church (the new Israel), and to view the nation as an instrument to bring about the millennium, caused trouble. Protestantism, as bearer of God's regenerative and redemptive promises, was too easily confused by some Protestants with the nation, which was partially a creature of a Protestant ethos and only an incidence of God's providential activity in the world.

Accent upon judgment did not prevent Americans from self-righteousness. As A. K. Weinberg and Reinhold Niebuhr have demonstrated in different ways,<sup>65</sup> America's self-image as an

<sup>64</sup> Smylie, *op.cit.*, pp. 65-115; Edward Frank Humphrey, *Nationalism and Religion in America, 1774-1789* (Boston: Chimpman Law Publishing Company, 1924), p. 536.

<sup>65</sup> A. K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press,

empire-servant was an invitation to continental imperialism, accumulation and manipulation of power often sanctified by the most specious of reasons behind a mask of innocence. Moreover, the success of the national enterprise, due largely to the abundance of place which made a "people of plenty,"<sup>66</sup> has been interpreted as a merit-badge of virtue. Be this as it may, the image of America which was a stimulant to aggressiveness also provided a bridle to American use of power, a spur to responsibility and a sense of accountability to God. Protestant clergymen had a propensity for world-saving, to be sure. But they may have made their greatest contribution to the nation by preventing American citizens from committing wholesale what Albert Camus called "deicide." They believed

in God, and in him a judgment beyond all human judgment, a check upon the pretence of Americans prone to mistake any national achievement as the actualization of his kingdom. They thus challenged themselves and others to consider the ultimate insecurity of all life, and to contemplate, amid the seeming boundlessness of national prospects,<sup>67</sup> death as the last boundary situation of man's existence. On the whole, Protestant clergymen helped prevent citizens of the new nation from grabbing from God the reins of history and from becoming locked irreparably through idolatry in self-righteousness, which, according to Herbert Butterfield,<sup>68</sup> is the most dangerous of national sins.

1935), p. 559; Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 174.

<sup>66</sup> David Potter, *People of Plenty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 217.

<sup>67</sup> Joseph Sittler has a very suggestive treatment of "The Tyranny of Boundlessness" in American life. Cf. *The Ecology of Faith* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 14-25.

<sup>68</sup> Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1949), p. 58.

# PROTESTANT CLERGY AND AMERICAN DESTINY

## II: PRELUDE TO IMPERIALISM 1865-1900

JOHN E. SMYLYE

IF in the Civil War God was preserving American nationality, giving the nation a baptism of blood,<sup>1</sup> the question arose naturally after that sacramental rebirth, why had nationality been preserved, what purpose was the regenerated nation to serve? In asking the question Protestant clergymen assumed that history had meaning, a plot, and that the United States would play a role in it. When they looked forward<sup>2</sup> what did they see ahead for America on the world stage? Upon investigation that forward look emerges as more than a blurred daydream. Leaders of Protestant thought analyzed American destiny in terms of contemporary interpretations of history.<sup>3</sup> From their anal-

ysis grew serious ideas of destiny which in retrospect appear as a prelude to later imperialism.

### I

The theological basis for this feeling of destiny was the common doctrine of providence. As ruler of history God accomplished his purposes in it. The issues became then: What were those purposes? And how were they accomplished?<sup>4</sup>

When God was transcendent and essentially mysterious, faith in his rule of history rested on feelings of trust and awe. Charles Hodge assumed God's relative transcendence, for although his God was not a mere spectator of history, neither was he the only efficient cause. World history, the realm of natural providence and secondary causes, was not to be confused with the history of grace given by the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> Hodge rejected *a priori* and rationalistic attempts to explain the details of how providence works.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William A. Clebsch, *Baptism of Blood: Christian Contributions to the Interpretation of the Civil War in American History* (Th.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1957), summarized in "Christian Interpretations of the Civil War," *Church History* xxx (June, 1961). The impact of this thesis is blunted because the idea of "nationality" is treated with little reference to the broader stream of nineteenth century thought.

<sup>2</sup> Perry Miller's "From the Covenant to the Revival," in *Religion in American Life* Vol. 1, *The Shaping of American Religion* (Princeton, 1961), shows that by this time the past orientation of covenant theology was giving way to the future perspective of revivalism.

<sup>3</sup> See chapters 2-4 of my *Protestant Clergymen and America's World Role 1865-1900, A Study of Christianity, Nationality*

and *International Relations* (Th.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., 1959) for a fuller treatment of the issues raised in this paper.

<sup>4</sup> A. V. G. Allen, "The Theological Renaissance of the Nineteenth Century," *The Princeton Review* LVIII (1882) pp. 263-282, LIX (1883) pp. 78-90.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (New York, 1873), p. 615.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 590.

Only in retrospect, and the longer the better, were conclusions possible about what God had in fact done.

Hodge could confidently assert that "God uses the nations with the absolute control that a man uses a rod or a staff . . . . He breaks them in pieces as a potter's vessel, or he exalts them to greatness, according to his good pleasure."<sup>7</sup> He overrules wars and revolutions to fulfill his wise and merciful designs. But entree to God's detailed designs was difficult. With regard to the Civil War Hodge stressed the difficulty and responsibility resting on those attempting to interpret its providential meaning. The only safe inference was that "the actual consequences of any event whether great or small, are its designed consequences." The immediate results of the Civil War were clear, and he talked about them, but Hodge saw that its larger consequences could not be known immediately, that providence could bring judgment as well as mercy, and hence it was difficult to be confident about the ultimate providential meaning of the immediate past much less the future.<sup>8</sup> Thus Lincoln's assassination was a most mysterious and awful event. "Yet we know," he wrote to his brother when the tragic news reached him, "that God reigns, and that nothing happens without his direction and control, and that it is his prerogative to bring light out of darkness and good out of evil."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 588.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Hodge, "President Lincoln," *The Princeton Review* xxxvii (1865), p. 436.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Hodge, Letter to Dr. H. L. Hodge, Princeton, April 15, 1865. Mss. collection in Firestone Library, Princeton, N.J.

A. H. Strong agreed that the doctrine of providence implied the *existence* of a design, not man's knowledge of the design. In light of this view of providence, Charles H. Parkhurst, the moral conscience of New York City, was content to compare the work of men in history to the unknowing work of countless coral polyps which gradually build islands in the sea without understanding the larger scope of their work. The glory of history was that it spelled out purposes and truths so far beyond "the microscopic minds and the little polyp-purposes" of men that "the best meaning even of men's own lives was one that was hidden from themselves."<sup>10</sup> In this view God acted in sovereign and transcendent freedom as one whose thoughts and ways were not man's, while man lived by faith before him.

This relative modesty before a transcendent deity contrasts sharply with immanentist tendencies in those decades. More and more it was assumed that man as rational creature could know God's plans not only for individuals and by hindsight, but for the whole world of nations and by foresight. Hegel led the dissatisfaction with the "peddling" (*kleinkramerei*) and indefinite view of providence.<sup>11</sup> Man could know the ends and the means of God's rule in history, think God's thoughts after him, advance plans on

<sup>10</sup> A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* Vol. II (Philadelphia, 1907), p. 431. Charles H. Parkhurst, "Divine Drift in Human History," *Magazine of American History* xxiv (November 24, 1890), p. 333.

<sup>11</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. by J. Sibree (New York, 1944), p. 14.

God's behalf, and—as it turned out—think God's thoughts before him.

In extreme form this approach changed providence from God's action "upon history" to his action "within it."<sup>12</sup> More popular was Josiah Strong's claim that it was no longer necessary for men to participate in God's plan blindly and unintelligently, as if they did not know the plan. In the new era science outstripped revelation. "Science, which is a revelation of God's laws and methods, enables us to fall into his plans intentionally and to co-operate with him intelligently for the perfecting of mankind, thus hastening forward the coming of the kingdom."<sup>13</sup>

A corollary of this view was the increasing confidence that God would bring good from all human evil. Judgment upon men and nations for sin, while not denied, was less and less relevant in the broad view of things, since God's purposes seemed always to prevail. Man, being privy to God's business in history, might neglect scruples while conducting his own business in the moral universe. In extreme application some concluded "the world is as it ought to be."<sup>14</sup> More commonly providence became the "philosopher's stone," inevitably turning "all to gold," even unrighteous wars.<sup>15</sup> In this view an immanent God acted in harmony with human reason since his ways were man's, while man lived in certainty before a reasonable God.

<sup>12</sup> Francis A. Henry, "Historic Forces," *The Princeton Review* LVI (January, 1880), p. 7. See also A. V. G. Allen, *op.cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Josiah Strong, *The New Era, or the Coming Kingdom* (New York, 1893), p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> Francis A. Henry, *op.cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> Hollis Read, *The Hand of God in History* (Philadelphia, 1870), pp. 574, 627.

## II

With the increasing assumption that God's ways were not past finding out, various interpretations of history were taken seriously as providing the clue for the future and America's role in it.<sup>16</sup> Missionaries, following Jonathan Edwards' recast of Augustine's history of redemption made *the evangelization of the world* the key to the coming kingdom of God.<sup>17</sup> Several groups, covering the spectrum from Seventh-Day Adventists to Anglo-Israelites, used a classic approach interpreting the goal of history as the fulfillment of apocalyptic prophecy.<sup>18</sup> In the avant-garde some preached Idealistic and romantic history, echoing Hegel<sup>19</sup> from Germany and Coleridge, Arnold and Maurice from Britain,<sup>20</sup> and painting life as the progressive *realization of rational freedom and social unity*. Others, influenced by Guizot,<sup>21</sup> Spen-

<sup>16</sup> Hitherto the problem of national destiny during this period has been treated apart from current philosophies of history. See for example, Daniel D. Williams, "Tradition and Experience in American Theology," in *Religion in American Life*, Vol. 1, *The Shaping of American Religion* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 485-491.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption, The Works of President Edwards* Vol. 1 (New York, 1852), pp. 468-470.

<sup>18</sup> LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*, Vol. IV (Washington D.C., 1954).

<sup>19</sup> G. W. F. Hegel's *The Philosophy of History* appeared in its standard English translation by J. Sibree in 1861 and was widely quoted in the last decades of the century.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Richard Sanders, *Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement* (Durham, N.C., 1942).

<sup>21</sup> F. P. G. Guizot, *General History of*

cer<sup>22</sup> and Ritschl,<sup>23</sup> talked of the coming of God's kingdom as *progress in civilization* through democracy, education, invention and altruism in society.

Each plot handled the coming of God's kingdom on earth differently, at least formally. But, as appropriated by American clergymen of the late nineteenth century, each allowed a unique destiny and responsibility for America. Regardless of the goal of history, America was to further, accomplish or embody it. If the evangelization of the world, American men and means would do it.<sup>24</sup> If fulfillment of prophecy America was positively the growing stone kingdom which filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:35) and the home of Israel's ten lost tribes; or negatively the two-horned beast (Rev. 13:11-17).<sup>25</sup> If freedom and unity, she was to unite diverse peoples within herself and throughout the world, bringing all into

the freedom of perfect law.<sup>26</sup> If civilization, certainly America was its best embodiment and propagandist; for democracy, education, social altruism and ease of life through invention and commerce were her specialties.<sup>27</sup> These confident conclusions were possible because historical science had discovered not only the goals of history as thus variously described, but also the means of their achievement.

### III

It was clear that God worked through nations in his kingdom on earth. Nationality was the very condition of history. Nations were the individuals of history without which there could be no history at all. It was this presupposition which made the preservation and rebirth of American nationality in the Civil War of utmost importance in itself and as precursive of America's place in the kingdom.

Difference of opinion arose over the

*Civilization in Europe*, ed. by C. S. Henry, (New York, 1846).

<sup>22</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston, 1955), pp. 31-42.

<sup>23</sup> Albert T. Swing, *Theology of Albrecht Ritschl* (New York, 1901); and Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, Vol. III (Edinburgh, 1900).

<sup>24</sup> Hollis Read, *op.cit.*; Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions, Their Relations and Claims* (New York, 1869); Arthur Tappan Pierson, *The Divine Enterprise of Missions* (New York, 1891), *The New Acts of the Apostles* (New York, 1894); Richard T. Stevenson, *The Missionary Interpretation of History* (Cincinnati, 1905).

<sup>25</sup> S. C. Alexander, *The Stone Kingdom* (Saint Louis, 1885); Joseph Wild, *The Lost Ten Tribes* (London, 1880); T. R. Howlett, *Anglo-Israel* (Philadelphia, 1896); Uriah Smith, *Our Country's Future, The United States in the Light of Prophecy* (Battle Creek, Michigan, 1884).

<sup>26</sup> William C. Wilson, "Our Historical Position as Indicated by Nature and Philosophy," *Methodist Quarterly Review* XLVIII (January, 1866); Elisha Mulford, *The Nation* (Boston, 1894), *The Republic of God, An Institute of Theology* (Boston, 1884); James M. Sterrett, *Reason and Authority in Religion* (New York, 1891); Frederic H. Hedge, "The Method of History," *North American Review* CXI (October, 1870), *The Primeval World of Hebrew Tradition* (Boston, 1870).

<sup>27</sup> Hugh Miller Thompson, *The World and the Man* (New York, 1890), *The World and the Kingdom* (New York, 1888); Caleb Sprague Henry, *History and Its Philosophy* (New York, 1868); Samuel Harris, *The Kingdom of Christ on Earth* (Andover, 1874); George D. Herron, *The Christian State, A Political Vision of Christ* (New York, 1897); E. P. Powell, *The Philosophy of History* (New York, 1893).

distinction between nations as instruments toward or as the essential embodiments of the kingdom. If instruments, room was preserved for the Church as the center of the kingdom. If essential embodiment, the Church played a contributing role only in perfecting nations. Elisha Mulford and Philip Schaff illustrate this difference and also the basic assumption that nations are the units of meaning in history.

Elisha Mulford's influential books represent the most thorough-going clerical exposition of Idealism in America during these decades. He taught that the nation was the absolute center of human life and the historic process. The purpose of human existence was moral perfection in history. Only in nations do individuals realize personality, morality and freedom. A people becomes a nation by accepting the vocation to further moral perfection. Inversely, loss of the sense of moral vocation terminates a people's role as an historic nation. "The goal of history is in the fulfillment of the highest political ideal," rational freedom. And, Mulford thought, history's goal was whispered in Reformation Germany, shouted out in Revolutionary France and realized in America.<sup>28</sup>

Christianity to him was a political principle and power perfecting the state.<sup>29</sup> The Church's task was not to redeem the world. Its task was to witness to the incarnation, not once and for all in Christ, but continuing in the redeemed world, in which this world's kingdoms actually become the king-

doms of Christ.<sup>30</sup> New Jerusalem has no temples (Rev. 21:26). Mulford's doctrine of immanence led him to carry the national principle into theology, expanding the idea of the nation into the Republic of God. By insisting that the Church would become absorbed in the nation, he reproduced thoughts of Hegel, Rothe and Thomas Arnold for whom the antithesis of Church and State had been resolved in the nation.

Other clerics supported this contention. For James Sterrett the kingdom of God in history was "an ethical and historical process of the spirit immanent in Christian nations and communities." George D. Herron believed that "if there is a purpose in history the state must be the organ for the accomplishment of that purpose."<sup>31</sup>

Philip Schaff willingly agreed to the instrumental role of nationality in history, for Hegel and the English Romantics also influenced him. His immigrant fascination with nationality resulted in several articles and a book about America's place in history.<sup>32</sup> But as a Church historian with Augustinian leanings he was anxious to preserve the centrality of the Christian community in history. America had a

<sup>30</sup> Elisha Mulford, *The Republic of God*, p. 216.

<sup>31</sup> James M. Sterrett, *Reason and Authority in Religion*, p. 102; George D. Herron, *The Christian State*, p. 54.

<sup>32</sup> Philip Schaff, "Anglo-Germanism or the Significance of the German Nationality in the United States. . ." (Chambersburg, Pa., 1846); *America* (New York, 1855) "American Nationality," (Chambersburg, Pa., 1856); "The English Language," in *Literature and Poetry* (New York, 1891), pp. 1-62; "Progress of Christianity in the United States of America," *Princeton Review* LV (September, 1879).

<sup>28</sup> Elisha Mulford, *The Nation*, pp. 418, 127.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 368.

destiny, but basically her role was that of helpful instrument for the Church, furnishing the context within which Protestant Christendom would accomplish unity, and the material resources for her world missionary task.<sup>33</sup> "Secular history, far from controlling sacred history, is controlled by it, must directly or indirectly subserve its ends, and can only be fully understood in the central light of Christian truth and the plan of salvation."<sup>34</sup>

As for Rothe's view that the Church would secularize itself at last into the state, Schaff preferred to reverse the current. He admitted that the separate existence of Church and State was but a transitional arrangement prior to their final union in a theocracy. But, he insisted, following the parable of the leaven, this meant a change in which the "State shall be transformed into the Church. . . . That Christ may rule king of nations, as he now ruleth king of saints in the Church which is his body."<sup>35</sup>

Only seldom, as in the work of Schaff's later colleague at Union, William G. T. Shedd, is there a categorical cleavage between the sacred and the secular in history, a cleavage supported in Shedd's case by a radical application of the parable of the wheat and tares.<sup>36</sup> The common conclusion was that God worked through successive nations to further his good purposes on earth.

<sup>33</sup> Philip Schaff, *America*, pp. 262-267.

<sup>34</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. I (New York, 1882), p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Philip Schaff, *Germany: Its Universities, Theology and Religion* (Philadelphia, 1857), p. 375.

<sup>36</sup> W. G. T. Shedd, *Lectures upon the Philosophy of History* (Andover, 1861); *Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy* (New York, 1893).

<sup>37</sup> Hegel, *ibid.*, pp. 80, 99, 103f.

#### IV

It being clear that nations were the unit of historic life, the laws of history also proved on the basis of geography, race and religion that the United States would be the next great historical nation. The poetic clue to America's geographical election came from George Berkeley's "Westward the course of empire takes its way." By the end of the nineteenth century poetry had become historic dogma thanks to Hegel. His world historical peoples all inhabited the north temperate zone, and his East and West were not merely directions but specific places, China and Western Europe.<sup>37</sup> Arnold Henry Guyot, the popular geographer at Princeton, buttressed logical certainty with empirical proof by showing that as the most westerly nation America had to enjoy an imperial destiny.<sup>38</sup>

This theme did yeoman's service in the prelude to imperialism. Baptist Elisha L. Magoon proved that civilization had not gone eastward an "inch" since history began.<sup>39</sup> Philip Schaff accepted the idea as "the general law of the geographical march of history both secular and sacred."<sup>40</sup> The issue which divided thought was whether West meant direction or a specific place.<sup>41</sup> Some contended that after its

<sup>38</sup> Arnold Henry Guyot, *The Earth and Man, Lectures on Comparative Physical Geography and its Relation to the History of Mankind* (New York, 1890).

<sup>39</sup> E. L. Magoon, *Westward Empire; or, the Great Drama of Human Progress* (New York, 1856).

<sup>40</sup> Philip Schaff, *America*, p. 101.

<sup>41</sup> Loren Baritz, "The Idea of the West," *American Historical Review* LXVI (April, 1961). This article shows the larger context of the distinction made here, although its documentation stops short of our period.

first cycle, then culminating in America, history would begin again on a higher level bringing new life to dead nations in the east. One, for example, believed that the westward march would never stop, and that Australia was improving upon America.<sup>42</sup>

Others were quite sure history's sun would make only one orbit, that America was its terminus ad quem—the determinative West balancing Hegel's East and embodying the acme of development, and that thereafter progress would mean not further advance but dissemination of American achievements. John Williamson Nevin found it impossible to believe in a "new circuit of civilization and culture in Asia." "Thus far and no farther! is the law prescribed by the Pacific Ocean," he said.<sup>43</sup> This case was strengthened by the fact that no land remained in northern latitudes which could produce a more advanced civilization. In imagery apt for Epiphany, it was concluded that the star of empire, having passed over Persia, Greece, Italy and Great Britain, would stand still, like the Magi's star, once it stood over the cradle of the young empire of the West.<sup>44</sup> Berkeley's poetry inspired imitators.

'Twas o'er the far East first  
The light of Empire burst  
In Orient gleams;  
But Westward since its way!

<sup>42</sup> William C. Wilson, *Methodist Quarterly Review* XLVIII, p. 6f.; and E. P. Powell *The Philosophy of History*, p. 397f.

<sup>43</sup> John W. Nevin, "Commencement Address, July 25, 1867," *Mercersburg Review* XIV (October, 1867), p. 494f.

<sup>44</sup> Josiah Strong, *Our Country* (New York, 1885), pp. 168, 29.

Here let its glories stay,  
Back-flashing earth's grand day  
In Freedom's beams.<sup>45</sup>

Racial make-up also assured America's destiny. J. G. Herder, reacting from the uniform anthropology of the Enlightenment, had distinguished static (non-historical) races from dynamic (historical) ones.<sup>46</sup> Hegel agreed and pointed to the Chinese, Greeks, Romans and Germans as history's four great peoples. American Anglo-Saxons, pleased with Hegel's presuppositions, faulted his logic for cutting the story short in Europe. Empirical facts made it clear that Anglo-Saxons in their new homeland of America, and not the continental Germans, were the last great world-historical people. The phenomenal growth of Anglo-Saxon populations and their world-wide colonies, with the parallel world domination of the English language proved the point.

Horace Bushnell explained these facts with a doctrine of the "godly seed" (Malachi 2:15). He contended that God had inserted into history "such laws of population that piety itself shall finally over-populate the world." God's promise that Abraham would be father of many nations had been transferred to the Church. The obvious and perhaps final example of that law was nineteenth century Anglo-Saxon expansion. Bushnell compared Puritan Christendom which was colonizing all lands and climates to the

<sup>45</sup> John McDowell Leavitt, *Our Flag, Our Rose and Our Country With Other Poems* (New York, 1909), p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 88-91; Hegel, *ibid.*, pp. 74f.

growing stone of Daniel 2:35, which became a great mountain and filled the whole world.<sup>47</sup> Sceptics who needed statistical proof of Bushnell's theory could turn to scientific data which would dispel their doubts.<sup>48</sup>

Nor was Jacob Grimm, the German philologist, spinning one of his fairy tales when he predicted that English would become the world's common tongue. By the end of the century his forecast could be verified, for by then, it was claimed, 27.7 percent of the world's population familiar with European languages used English.<sup>49</sup> Philip Schaff was exuberant about it, claiming that English was the best medium for spreading Christianity and civilization.<sup>50</sup> As the new homeland of the world's great race and language, as the eldest Anglo-Saxon son, America would play a role comparable to the Greeks and Romans in antiquity.

Hugh Miller Thompson, teacher, editor and bishop in the Episcopal church, was confident that as the most highly developed race in history, Anglo-Saxons were bound to rule, order and control, "most kindly but most firmly, all peoples not so developed with which it comes in contact." And, he observed, in the family of nations "the big brother ought to help and direct the little brother—some-

times, perhaps, box the little fellow's ears!"<sup>51</sup>

Besides geography and race, Protestants were confident of America's future on religious grounds. Historic progress presupposed religious progress, and the United States was the seat of the highest and final religion, Protestant Christianity. A people's concept of God determined its character. Religion determined politics, its form decided that of the state and its constitution. Hegel insisted that only under Protestant auspices could right and rational subjective freedom develop.<sup>52</sup> Guizot made true progress the result of Protestantism, and Jonathan Edwards presupposed that North America was allotted to Protestants.<sup>53</sup>

The atmosphere which fostered the American Protective Association at one end of the social spectrum was produced in part at the other end by Protestant intellectual leaders with their footnoted philosophies of history. God had controlled American colonization so that Protestants would inhabit and shape the United States. Selective providence had frustrated Roman Catholic efforts by Spain, Portugal and France, in spite of bulls assuring their privileges. Romanists were not suited for the empire of freedom to be founded in the United States.<sup>54</sup> Bishop William Stevens Perry of Iowa, historiographer of the Protestant Episcopal Church, for example, asserted Columbus never saw North

<sup>47</sup> Horace Bushnell, *Christian Nurture*, (New York, 1861), pp. 195-223.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel Dorchester, *The Problem of Religious Progress* (New York, 1881); and Sidney L. Gulick, *The Growth of the Kingdom of God* (New York, n.d.).

<sup>49</sup> Josiah Strong, *The New Era*, p. 62f.; Sidney Gulick, *ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>50</sup> Philip Schaff, "The English Language," *Literature and Poetry* (New York, 1891), pp. 1-62.

<sup>51</sup> Hugh Miller Thompson, *The World and the Man* (New York, 1890), p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> Hegel, *ibid.*, pp. 51, 435.

<sup>53</sup> J. Edwards, *ibid.*, p. 469.

<sup>54</sup> Jesse T. Peck, *The History of the Great Republic* (New York, 1868), p. 47.

America; God deliberately kept Spanish ships to the south! John Cabot discovered it for England, and for four centuries since 1493 Roman civilization in Mexico had fought Protestant and English civilization in the United States. His further sentiments at the Columbian centennial were hardly conducive to dialogue. "We the people of the United States," he claimed, "owe nothing to Columbus, nothing to Spain, nothing to Rome! The genesis of our nationality; our liberty, both civil and religious; our free institutions; our very Christianity, are all to be traced . . . to the English people and to the English Church and Christianity."<sup>55</sup>

George Park Fisher, professor of divinity and church history at Yale, and one time president of the American Historical Association, asserted that "the growth and establishment of the Republic of the United States are events so intimately connected with Protestantism and so dependent upon it, that we may point to them as monuments of the true spirit and tendency of the reformed religion."<sup>56</sup> Religiously, therefore, as well as geographically and racially, the United States was the most advanced national agent of the kingdom of God. She was bound to emerge as the next great historical people in whom the highest values of history would be realized and disseminated.

## V

Other historical themes were laced

<sup>55</sup> William Stevens Perry, "Four Centuries of Conflict for the Continent of North America," (Pamphlet, n.p., n.d.); *America, The Study of Nations: Her Religious Destiny* (Davenport, Iowa, 1893), p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> George P. Fisher, *Discussions in History and Theology* (New York, 1880), p. 169.

into this prelude to imperialism. Advance, regardless of how defined, involved moral and physical struggle, so that where nations were concerned war seemed a necessary constituent of history. The classic Christian view which saw history as struggle between darkness and light, the self-loving children of Cain against the God-living descendants of Abel, received scientific analysis in the nineteenth century. Hegel's historic waltz step made the struggle of antithesis, resulting from human passions and overruled by the cunning of reason, absolutely necessary for the Spirit's freedom. Every step forward in freedom and civilization had in fact been accompanied by warfare, it was claimed. Social Darwinism, despite Spencer's personal pacifism and his analysis of the altruistic phase of development, presupposed a struggle in which the fit survive.<sup>57</sup> Small wonder that warfare between good and evil, forward and backward, seemed historically inevitable, at least for the time being.

"Christ brought the sword not peace," said Frederick H. Hedge, Harvard's ecclesiastical historian. Ethically war deserved condemnation as a moral evil. But the moral aspect of war was not the only consideration. However hopeful one might be that war would one day end, it was in fact a "normal crisis in human affairs." The philosophic historian therefore had to consider war from its "objective, providential side."<sup>58</sup> War, said others, had not yet fulfilled its dreadful mission, for the consum-

<sup>57</sup> Hegel, *ibid.*, pp. 23, 26; Guizot, *ibid.*, p. 269; R. Hofstadter, *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> Frederick H. Hedge, *North American Review* CXI, pp. 324f.

mations of history were to come only "through deadly strifes on the battle field."<sup>59</sup> Lyman Abbott, for all the support he gave to the peace movement, had yet to conclude, well in advance of the Spanish American War, that in the protection of others love could fight, while selfishness could not for its own profit.<sup>60</sup> Gilbert Haven, bishop of the Methodist Church, thought that as democracy's "divinely appointed representatives and defenders," the United States might also have to become its "divinely armed and appointed propagandists" creating the coming world republic.<sup>61</sup> Whatever else lay ahead for America as the servant of freedom, civilization and pure Christianity, the future would involve struggle, perhaps war, on their behalf.

Lastly, the late nineteenth century, freighted as it was with momentous advancements toward the realization of the key values of history, was believed to be a *kairos*, a fullness of time, years which would change the future course of history. By any measure it was a great century! The fact that a very large proportion of the "progress" of the human race had been accomplished in their century was not lost on that generation.<sup>62</sup> In freedom, American slaves and Russian serfs had been emancipated. In civilization, democracy and altruism were winning their way, and science was changing daily life especially with instantaneous world

communication. In the plan of salvation, evangelization was under way in almost the whole known world. Expectancy filled the air.

As missionary spokesman for Protestant America, Arthur Tappan Piereson had little doubt that "the fullness of time has come, and the end seems at hand, which is also the beginning of the last and greatest age."<sup>63</sup> The nineteenth was second only to the first century with its Incarnation and Resurrection. It was the "Saturday evening" of the world's week of work, before the beginning of the long awaited Sabbath rest.<sup>64</sup> Arthur Cleveland Coxe embodied this expectancy, as well as other themes of history, in a marching song for his generation.

We are living, we are dwelling  
In a grand and awful time,  
In an age on ages telling;  
To be living is sublime.  
Hark! the waking up of nations,  
Gog and Magog to the fray.  
Hark! what soundeth is creation  
Groaning for its latter day.

Such were the basic ideas of history and the role of American nationality in history as expounded by northern Protestant clergymen in the decades following the Civil War. They harmonized with the historical philosophies of the times, and furnished categories in terms of which many of those same clergymen were later to interpret the Spanish American War and Philip-

<sup>59</sup> Hollis Read, *ibid.*, p. 834.

<sup>60</sup> Lyman Abbott, *Christianity and Social Problems* (Boston, 1897), p. 240.

<sup>61</sup> Gilbert Haven, *National Sermons* (Boston, 1869), p. 471.

<sup>62</sup> Josiah Strong, *Our Country* (1885), pp. 1-3.

<sup>63</sup> A. T. Pierson, *The Crisis of Missions* (New York, 1886), p. 27.

<sup>64</sup> B. B. Smith, *Saturday Evening; or, Thoughts on the Progress of the Plan of Redemption* (New York, 1876).

pine annexation.<sup>65</sup> If it is correct to assume with Charles Beard that "all great human causes turn on theories of history,"<sup>66</sup> these patterns of interpre-

<sup>65</sup> Kenneth M. MacKenzie's study of Methodist opinion in *The Robe and the Sword* (Washington, D.C., 1961) offers the most recent documentation of Protestant opinion during those crises. Other studies of the same problem include William Archibald Karraker's *The American Churches and the Spanish American War* (Dissertation,

tation go far to explain the temper of Protestant America on the eve of imperialism.

University of Chicago, 1940), and Julius W. Pratt's *Expansionists of 1898* (Baltimore, 1936). My own study (*ibid.*, chapters 7 and 8) attempts to analyze these opinions in the larger context of nineteenth century interpretations of history and moral philosophy.

<sup>66</sup> Charles A. Beard, "Introduction," in Brooks Adams, *The Law of Civilization and Decay* (New York, 1955), p. viii.

# Suppose . . . One Sunday Morning

. . . Look around you in this place!  
Is yours a group which you consider  
friendly?  
Are you quite happy here? And is it active,  
This happiness of yours, or mere content-  
ment,  
Mere satisfaction with the *status quo*?  
I'm sure that on some past Communion Sun-  
day  
When many joined our church, we stayed  
for coffee  
And went through all the motions of a wel-  
come,  
And—then what? Did it stop right then  
and there?  
Did we feel the church required a duty of us?  
Did we feel that we'd discharged it rather  
well?  
After all, we said "Hello" and "Welcome"—  
What more was there to do? We'd gladly  
have them  
To dinner once or twice, that is, if we  
Could find the proper opportunity!  
I wonder what would happen if, one day,  
One Communion, Jesus Christ should pass  
this way  
And, noticing the crowd, should happen in  
and hear us all confess our every sin  
To clear our conscience, that we might be  
able  
To gather once again around the table  
And hear the minister ministering in his  
name  
Pronounce those wondrous words, the very  
same  
Which he repeated once to his disciples.  
And as he called the new members to rise  
And come forward, suppose our own Lord  
Jesus

Stepped from a pew, walked forward with  
the rest!  
And let's assume we *knew* that he was Jesus!  
How would we welcome him? Would we  
say "Welcome!"  
My name is Smith (or Jones, or Peterson).  
I've been a member here for quite a while,  
I'm sure that you'll be very happy here.  
How would you like your coffee? Cream and  
sugar?  
Let me know if there's anything I can do!"  
The promissory note! I knew we'd get to it!  
Payable on demand! "Just let me know  
If there's anything I can do!" Did we say  
that?  
And in this way we'd greet  
our Lord and Savior?  
Or give him invitations by the score  
And hope that we had issued just one more  
Than any of the others. Would we boast  
Of special meals prepared, how good the  
roast  
The night he came to our house? Or would  
we  
Brag of well-established intimacy:  
"Why, just the other day, I said, J. C.!"—  
Name dropping as we do!—Don't be of-  
fended,  
No sacrilegious insult was intended.  
I just was bent on wondering aloud  
How Jesus would have mingled in our  
crowd!  
Would any of us, recognizing him,  
Have bowed the knee, or washed his feet, or  
kissed  
The hem of any garb he might be wearing?  
And would we have thought it  
far beneath our bearing  
To treat just *any other* new member so?

—Bud Collyer, in *Thou Shalt Not Fear*, Fleming H. Revell Co.,  
Westwood, N.J., 1962. Used by permission

(Mr. Collyer, well-known American television moderator, is an elder in the First Presby-  
terian Church, Stamford, Conn.)

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Ancient Israel—Its Life and Institutions*, by Roland de Vaux. Trans. by John McHugh. McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1961. Pp. xxviii + 592. \$10.95.

The author of this extensive work, who is a member of the Dominican order, has long been director of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem (Jordan) and editor of the well-known journal *Revue Biblique*. He is also a leading archaeologist and a specialist in Semitic scripts and Biblical languages. Furthermore he was the senior member of the editorial committee that completed the recent French translation of the Bible, which is known as the *Bible de Jérusalem*. This volume is a translation of *Les Institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, published in two volumes, Paris, 1958-60; the English edition contains a number of additions and corrections, and the bibliography has been brought up to date to the beginning of 1961.

The book consists of four main parts: Family Institutions, Civil Institutions, Military Institutions, and Religious Institutions. The latter which is the most important section contains 246 pages. In a work of such comprehensive scope it is not possible to give a detailed review. Under civil institutions may be noted a brief section on population, in which de Vaux estimates that in the first half of the eighth century B.C. the total population of Israel and Judah cannot have been much over a million. A brief survey of ancient Semitic law is presented, but the close connection between Mosaic law and the code of Hammurabi is explained by the influence of a single widespread customary law. As regards the structure of Old Testament legislation, it is closer to that of the Hittite documents. In the Hittite treaties are found both apodictic and casuistic forms, and according to the author these resemblances are not accidental: the covenant between Yahweh and Israel had to be sealed by a treaty. The form of a treaty remains in the Holiness Code, which concludes with a reference to the covenant (Lev. 26:46). The close connection between

law and religion in Israel is also brought out.

The author admits that Biblical metrology will probably never be an exact science and that only approximations of modern values can be attached to Biblical weights and measures. No doubt many readers for convenience of study and reference would like to have tables of approximate equivalents, but whatever values the writer gives to various units must be dug out of the text. In passing, it may be noted that the fourth part of a *qab* of dove's dung (2 Kings 6:25) is interpreted as that quantity of "wild onions."

In speaking of war, the author gives a short military history of Israel and brief sections on the conduct and consequences of war. He refers to the *jihad*, the holy war of Islam, to spread the faith by force of arms, but he maintains that this concept of the holy war was foreign to Israel. Yet war at an early period had been invested with a sacred character, but this concept disappeared with the advent of the monarchy.

By far the most valuable part of the book for the pastor is the section on religious institutions. The author believes that the Israelites in their nomadic life had a portable sanctuary or tent, but to him it is obvious that much of the description of the Tabernacle is merely an idealization and a reconstruction based on the Temple. The title "high priest" was not used to indicate the head of the priesthood before the Exile. De Vaux correctly says that it is unscientific to apply indiscriminately to Israel everything that took place in neighboring lands and religions, and he maintains that it is impossible to prove that prophets once were attached to the Temple at Jerusalem. Furthermore he dismisses the theory of a feast of the annual enthronement of Yahweh and makes the observation that the Israelite cult was connected with history and not with myth. Nor did Israel ever have the idea of a king who was a god. As regards the Day of Atonement he concludes that the feast was instituted at a late date, but he cannot give a precise statement. These samples are sufficient to show in general the point of view and the trends presented

in this volume. While the author has a critical knowledge of the Old Testament, he does not accept theories merely because they happen to be recent.

This book contains a bibliography of about 1000 items. The indexes are good: general index of six pages, one of proper names of eight full pages, and one of three pages listing the Semitic forms. The index of Biblical references occupies twenty-one full pages. It is accordingly a very valuable book of reference, and we are indebted to the translator, who has made this work available in such readable form. Students of theology and parish ministers can use this fine work to great advantage in their studies.

HENRY S. GEHMAN

*Discoveries in the Judean Desert II: Les Grottes de Murabba'at*, by P. Benoit, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux. 2 vols. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1961. Pp. 304, and CVII pl. \$26.90.

In a progress report made in 1956 on the work of editing the manuscript fragments from Qumran, a publication program of eight or nine volumes was announced which would cover all of the material discovered in the Judean desert between 1951 and 1955.<sup>1</sup> Volume I of this series, dealing with the fragments of Cave I at Qumran, has already appeared.<sup>2</sup> After six long years the second volume has finally been published. As the title indicates, it contains the texts found in the caves of Wadi Murabba'at in 1952 together with a section on the history of the discoveries in the area and a detailed description of the archaeological finds in the various strata of the cave floors.

On the north side of a deep gorge, known as Wadi Murabba'at, which lies about 16 miles southeast of Jerusalem and about 11 miles south of Qumran, are four enormous caves which contain evidence of occupation from the 4th millennium B.C. down to Roman and Arab times. Père de Vaux, the excavator of Qumran and editor-in-chief of

the series, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, writes the first section on the "Archaeology" of the caves of Murabba'at (pp. 1-63), with a contribution by G. M. and Elizabeth Crowfoot on "The Textiles and Basketry." Twenty coins from the Roman period, only two of which were found by the excavators themselves in the caves, are described (pp. 45-47).

The rest of the volume deals with the three major groups of texts discovered at Murabba'at—Hebrew and Aramaic, by far the most important section (J. T. Milik), Greek and Latin (P. Benoit), and Arabic (Ad. Grohmann). They are classified according to the material on which they were written—skins, papyri and ostraca. There are general introductions to the sections, dealing with the historical background of the texts, and with philological and paleographical problems.

The principal Biblical texts consist of fragments of Isaiah and the Pentateuch, and a text of the Minor Prophets which is very important for Septuagint scholars. There is also a complete phylactery which is of interest for the history of Jewish religious practices. The secular works consist largely of contracts of sale and marriage. Of special importance for the history of the second Jewish revolt against the Romans (A.D. 132-5) are letters written by Simeon ben Kosebah, better known by his "Messianic" name, Bar Kokhbab.

The second volume of this publication contains 110 plates with excellent photographs of all the 173 published texts. It appears that No. 157 and the verso of No. 171 are the same fragment, printed twice. Much valuable information is found in this publication, and scholars are indebted to the editors and publishers who have produced this beautiful edition of the Murabba'at material.

CHARLES T. FRITSCH

*The Servant—Messiah*, T. W. Manson. Cambridge University Press, 1961. Pp. 104. \$1.25 (Paper Edition).

This rather short study of the public ministry of Jesus, as its sub-title declares it to be, compresses a great deal of research and thought into its few pages of print. The content is a combination of the Shaffer Lec-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Revue Biblique* LXIII (1956) 51; also *The Biblical Archaeologist* XIX (1956) 78.

<sup>2</sup> Barthélemy, D. and J. T. Milik, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert I: Qumran Cave*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1955.

tures (Yale, 1939) and course lectures at Cambridge on the subject of the Messianic Ministry (1951). The style is typically light, and the material is typically accurate, well annotated and challenging.

Manson has divided his topic into six areas: The Messianic Hope and Herald; The Messianic Ministry—Principles, Practice, and the Passion; concluding with the implications of the Risen Christ and the Messianic Succession.

The Messianic Hope is defined, for Judaism, as the reestablishment of the unity of the political and Spiritual life of Israel broken by the fall of the two kingdoms. This Manson sees as an attempt at reintegration of the present and continuity with the past—to be achieved via the Covenant. He therefore sets the Gospels into this context of the hope of Jewish restoration in the face of Roman domination—a hope for which revolution would be a “holy war”—a war for the Kingdom of God, itself.

The Messianic Hope is further identified with the particular Messianism promulgated by the dominant Pharisaism of the period.

Against the background of that kind of hope, the Herald, in the person of John, is seen as the last stand of traditional Judaism urging “legal” preparation for the Messiah. In contrast to the Herald, is the figure of Jesus, whose ministry will provide the possibility of real human change (“repentance”) by faith and love. Hence, just as the end of the Jewish Messianic expectation is challenged by the ministry of Jesus, so also are the means of accomplishing it. The transformation of the means (the “Principles”), thus bring about a transformation of the role of the Messiah, himself. On this basis, therefore, the total meaning of the Messianic Ministry of Jesus will be made intelligible.

Logically, therefore, Chapter IV considers the Practice of the Messianic Ministry as conceived by Jesus. Manson considers this to be largely a matter of attitude, with “God’s way of merciful redemptive love” as its key. This at once introduces for Manson the tension between the Jewish interpretation of the Hope, and the view of Jesus concerning it. Questions of the political, chronological and theological facets of the issue are also raised in this relation. As a consequence of the tension and its crucial

implications, the Passion (Ch. V) becomes the “logical issue,” for Jesus, of the Messianic service, and of the Messianic role. Yet, says Manson, the Passion is not the end of the role, but rather a point *within* it. The heart of the meaning of the Messianic role depends here upon a definition of resurrection as the reawakening, as it were, of this life, not of transportation into an other-worldly existence. Thus the “message” of the empty tomb is threefold: the assertion of the continuing leadership of Jesus, Himself; the assurance of the continuing ministry of the Messiah; and the continuation of the practice of the delegation of the task to His disciples. Hence, the meaning of the empty tomb for the Church today is that Christians are still the *companions* of Jesus, not merely His successors—in working with Him in His (Messianic) Ministry.

Manson’s digressions are of more than passing interest in this volume, involving the etymologies of “Sadducee,” and “Pharisee” (Ch. I), the historical and geographical aspects of John’s ministry *vis-a-vis* Herod (Ch. II), the missionary aspects of the Cleansing of the Court of the Gentiles, the legal implications of the Anointing at Bethany (Ch. V) and other, less basic, matters.

This volume is to be recommended not only for its content, but for its fresh and provocative presentation of the Messianic Ministry—then and now!

PHILIP C. HAMMOND

*The Epistle to the Philippians*, by Karl Barth. Trans. by James W. Leitch from the German *Eklärung des Philipperbriefes* (6th edition, 1947). John Knox Press, Richmond, Va., 1962. Pp. 128. \$2.50.

One does not ordinarily expect a work in translation to carry the same impact as the text in its original tongue. Yet these expositions of the Epistle to the Philippians, delivered as a course of university lectures in German, lose none of the characteristic vigor of Karl Barth in English.

Without indulging in any introductory preliminaries the Swiss theologian plunges directly into exposition of the text, and

proceeds to treat it part by part. He assumes that the reader initially is interested in Paul's message and that he will welcome being led step by step into its depths. Although Barth assures the reader he need have no special theological training to follow the exposition, the specialist is not forgotten. Items which require special attention usually are treated in succinct footnotes without much elaboration, e.g., praetorium, 1:13; the abrupt beginning of chapter 3; the meaning of *politeuma*, 3:20, etc. Greek terminology first is transliterated in italics, followed by the English equivalent in parenthesis, then its accompanying explanation is given. The voice of Luther occasionally rings out in the exposition: "I must do it," 1:24; so also does the wisdom of Calvin: "I would have perished, if I had not 'perished,'" 3:9. Wherever Barth differs sharply from a plausible interpretation, as he does from that of Dibelius (on "calling" at 3:13) he does not hesitate to give ample reasons for doing so, and always with a sense of deep conviction.

A striking feature of this commentary is the English translation of the text. Although no suggestion is given to this effect one would gather from occasional footnotes by the translator that the English is derived from Barth's own German translation. If this be the case the result is impressive, for the commentary itself elaborates and expounds the translation as given, yet with frequent references to the underlying Greek text. Although some of the renderings would hardly qualify as smooth English, they none-the-less are apt expressions of Paul's meaning, as for instance: "Mind among you that which must be minded in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God did not regard equality with God as spoil" 2:5; "I race on in the hope that I may apprehend, seeing that I am apprehended by Christ Jesus" 3:12; "Do not be anxious about anything, but as often as you worship and pray let your troubles come before God with thanksgiving . . ." 4:6. And upon this last rendering Barth comments: "To begin by praising God for the fact that in *this* situation, as it is, he is so mightily God—such a beginning is the *end* of anxiety."

Much more could well be added about the vigor of this exposition, yet enough has already been said to indicate why it has

passed through six German editions, and why it is bound to be widely read and deeply appreciated in its first English edition.

HOWARD TILLMAN KUIST

*Follow Me: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew*, by Martin H. Franzmann. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1961. Pp. ix + 240. \$3.50.

Good commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels are rare merchandise, and it is a special joy for the reviewer to come across such a solid and useful study as Dr. Franzmann's interpretation of Matthew. As the subtitle indicates, this work is not meant to exhaust all that the evangelist wants to convey to his readers, but it certainly presents the Gospel in its right perspective. For more than any other of the evangelists, the author of the First Gospel sees in Jesus primarily the God-sent teacher who instructs his disciples concerning the way of following the Master. Unlike the liberal exegetes, however, who onesidedly emphasized the ethical message of Matthew, the Lutheran theologian points out continually how essential the ministry of Jesus was for the training of the Twelve and those who are to follow them. For they are not to apply an abstract moral code to their lives, but rather to live in the company of the God-sent Messiah in spite of his perplexing and incomprehensible conduct.

Again, the author is sufficiently aware of the fundamental difference that there is between him whom God has appointed as the Christ, on the one hand, and the Disciples, on the other. Following Jesus does not mean imitating Jesus. Who would be able to do so! Rather it is a life, in which common people acknowledge the divine mission of Jesus as the event which gives meaning to their lives. Following Jesus does not exclude little faith, misunderstanding of his hidden greatness, and even, as in the last night, outright abandonment. But it also implies the awareness of the never failing patience by which the Master bears the disciples, and the disclosure of the eternal spring of strength which is at the disposal of failing humans. In other words, the teaching of

Jesus is not concerned with moral rules but rather with faith and love and hope.

Two features stand out in particular in this profound and original study. One is the close and organic connection in which Jesus is seen with the Old Testament. His work is truly the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. In the center of the Gospel we see a man who continues God's redemptive history under the Old Covenant, but who also brings to light that secret of the true life at which the leaders of ancient Israel had only hinted. The reader will gratefully accept the guidance that is given here on every page through the Old Testament as recuperated and perfected by Jesus. The other feature is perhaps even more startling than the demonstration of the oneness of the two Testaments, for which the author had some enlightened predecessors. Dr. Franzmann's penetrating study lays bare the intimate relationship between Matthew and Paul. The way in which the St. Louis professor is able to point out the parallels between the Apostle and the evangelist makes obvious not only that Paul's view of the Gospel was rooted in Jewish thought, but also that he must have been thoroughly familiar with Jesus' demand of discipleship.

Notwithstanding its broad and solid scholarship this book is written in a clear and direct style and should prove a real help both to the preacher and to Bible study groups.

OTTO A. PIPER

*Fact and Faith in the Kerygma of Today*, by Paul Althaus. Trans. by David Cairns. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1961. Pp. 89. \$1.75.

In Germany, Bultmann's theology and method have been taken to task most severely by the confessional Lutheran theologians. A clinching epitome of this controversy is offered in this slender volume written by the Professor emeritus of Systematic Theology at Erlangen. The author stresses above all two points: first, concerning our knowledge of the Jesus of history, that there is no reason for the radical historical scepticism professed by Bultmann; and secondly, that the existentialistic concentration on the *Christ for me* can be car-

ried out consistently only when essential features of the New Testament message are ruthlessly suppressed.

Althaus is aware of the historical problem implied in the belief in Jesus. He frankly admits that, as with all historical knowledge, the portrait of Jesus as conveyed by the New Testament is not free from historical uncertainties. He holds, however, that historical "intuition" will offer us a total picture that is absolutely reliable, since the uncertainties brought to light by historical criticism concern details only. While rejecting the suggestion that the historical portrait of the person and story of Jesus thus ascertained formed the basis of the certainty of faith—that effect is the product of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer—the Lutheran divine rightly insists that the kerygma refers to the saving significance of the historical life of Jesus, which fact is denied by Bultmann. Althaus also rejects the arbitrariness of an existential interpretation of the kerygma, in which all those features of the Gospels are dismissed as mythical which do not state plainly the significance which Christ has for the understanding of the reader's self.

This brief study is well written and equally well translated, and like all of this great German theologian's publications it is eminently clear in the presentation of its argument. This reviewer is not so sure, however, whether Bultmann and Gogarten, whose support of Bultmann comes up for frequent criticism, too, would concede defeat. Bultmann's historical scepticism, against which Althaus' main thrust is directed, is certainly excessive. However, it plays but a subordinate role in his methodology. The Marburg professor points out rather that we may safely give up the hopeless search for an historically ascertained portrait of the Jesus of history, because faith is not concerned with him, but with the heavenly Christ who is the author of the Easter faith. Althaus seeks the solution of the problem in the dialectical juxtaposition of historical inquiry and the acceptance of the Gospel by faith, yet fails to connect the two approaches organically. He prefers, as so often in his theology, to speak of an unavoidable tension. Although his view comes closer to the way in which faith is described in the New Testament

than does G. Bornkamm's succession of statement of facts and subjective interpretation, it still misreads the evidence.

In the experience of faith, the Gospel is received as a divine message of salvation which is based upon the work of Christ. Faith takes the reality of Christ's work for granted without immediately inquiring into the manner in which that reality becomes operative in one's own life. This explains why it happened that in the history of faith that connection was interpreted, e.g., as gnostic revelation, mystical fellowship, sacramental presence or symbolical conformity. In view of this diversity, existentialism could at least demand the benefit of the doubt for the correctness of its interpretation. There can be no doubt, however, but that the perspective of holy history (*Heilsgeschichte*), in which the Gospels present the work of Christ as the fulfilment of the history of Israel and as execution of God's redemptive plan, is most closely in keeping with the message of the Primitive Church as found in the New Testament Letters.

OTTO A. PIPER

*Luther and the Bible*, by Willem Jan Kooiman. Trans. by John Schmidt. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1961. Pp. ix + 243. \$4.00.

Dr. Kooiman, Professor at the University of Amsterdam, Holland, is well known in Europe as a Luther scholar. The present volume, which was available in German only, should prove to be of greatest value to anybody interested in Luther's view of the Bible and the use he made of it. Dr. Kooiman's works covers all the aspects of the subject, especially Luther's appreciation of the Bible, the history of his exegetical activity, the Bible in Luther's own life, the history of his work as translator of the Bible, and his hermeneutical principles. The author is fully familiar with the ample literature on the subjects treated in his volume. While on the whole in agreement with the reformer, he treats with some reserve and misgivings some of Luther's exegetical practices. Although never reading alien ideas into the text, Luther nevertheless has a way of connecting practically

every passage with Justification and the work of Christ, in which modern exegesis would hardly dare to follow him. The incredible influence Luther exerted in Wittenberg for several decades upon a whole generation of future ministers was due to his regular expository sermons as much as, and perhaps even more than, to his class lectures. One regrets, therefore, that lack of space prevented the author from dealing with Luther's expository preaching in any detail.

Dr. Kooiman's study is not only an excellent inventory of recent scholarship but brings also to light a picture of Luther as the "man of the Bible," which shows his high rank as a theologian and a scholar and thus helps to understand the immense success of his work. While it is true that Erasmus surpassed Luther in the field of philological learning, Luther was in no respect a mean scholar. Whereas Erasmus' appreciation of the New Testament language was primarily an esthetic one, Luther displayed an empathetic understanding of the Biblical text that enabled him to grasp the Biblical writers' basic concern and thus made him the ideal translator. One is particularly grateful to Dr. Kooiman, who is a Lutheran himself, for his intelligent discussion of Luther's view of the authority of the Bible. Although Reu and other Lutheran scholars have made strenuous attempts to depict Luther as champion of a dictation theory of Inspiration, Luther emphasizes, as the author shows clearly, that the Bible in its totality is the Word that God speaks to the reader, leaving thereby to the exegete great freedom in the treatment of details.

OTTO A. PIPER

*Luther's Works*. Volume 3: *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 15-20*. Trans. by George V. Schick. Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, 1961. Pp. x + 394. \$6.00.

*Luther's Works*. Volume 24: *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 14-16*. Trans. by Martin H. Bertram. Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, 1961. Pp. x + 448. \$6.00.

*Luther's Works*. Volume 37: *Word and Sacrament III*. Trans. by Robert H. Fischer. Muhlenberg, Philadelphia, 1961. Pp. xxi + 406. \$5.00.

The new English translation of Luther's Works makes good progress. The third volume of the Genesis lectures continues Luther's exposition delivered in 1538-39. It has all the geniality and weakness of Luther's later expository style. The Biblical text is taken seriously in its fulness. Even apparently purely historical remarks are shown by the context to reveal the way of God's dealing with man. In turn, since he goes back to the basic features of God's activity, Luther is then able to apply the text both to the believer's inner life and to contemporary problems. But except when seen in the broader context of the whole Bible, this applicability would not everywhere come to light, and hence the modern reader will ask himself: Did the verse of the Bible, which the exegete wanted to expound, really yield this application? How far may we go with the *analogia Scripturae* without substituting our view of Christianity for the total meaning of the Bible?

The Sermons on John 14-16, Luther considered next to his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount to be his best book. Nowhere does he speak more intimately about the significance which Christ has for our life, and about the nature of faith. Strangely it was the relative absence of "doctrine" and polemics, and the practical devotional character of this work that has led to its later neglect.

The third volume devoted to the Sacraments finally reproduces the two main contributions Luther made to the controversy on the Lord's Supper, viz., "That These Words of Christ, etc." of 1527, and the elaborate "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" of 1528. The translator himself considers it unfortunate that owing to the polemical situation in which these books were written, Luther should have been carried to excesses of language which tend to distort rather than accentuate his concern for true fellowship with Christ. From the scholarly viewpoint, this volume is particularly well done, because beyond the footnotes contained in the German text of the

Weimar Edition nearly all the references to Luther's opponents have been tracked down, and are quoted verbatim wherever their text contributes to a better understanding of Luther's view.

OTTO A. PIPER

*Images of the Church in the New Testament*, by Paul S. Minear. The Westminster Press, Phila., 1960. Pp. 294. \$6.00.

One of the most illuminating of the many studies in Biblical Theology to appear during the past decade is this analysis of the manifold terms used in the Bible to describe the people of God. Undertaken as a project to assist in the world-wide conversations regarding ecumenism and the nature of the church, Professor Minear of Yale Divinity School has put into readable and convenient form a great deal of solid research.

It is in harmony with the kind of literature one finds in the Bible that there is no clear-cut, Aristotelian-like definition of the nature and constitution of the church. Instead one finds a multiplicity of figures or images used to describe various aspects of the people of God, their relation and responsibility to God. The reader will be surprised at the large number of such analogies or metaphors; Minear finds ninety-six of them! About thirty of these he dismisses with a relatively brief discussion as "minor images" (e.g. the salt of the earth, the ark, branches of the vine, the elect lady, ambassadors, the poor). In succeeding chapters Minear groups the remaining images under the rubrics, "The People of God" (e.g. Israel, a holy nation, the elect, the holy temple, priesthood), "The New Creation" (e.g. first fruits, the new humanity, the last Adam, the coming age, the tree of life), "The Fellowship in Faith" (e.g. the faithful, disciples, witnessing community, slaves, household of God, brotherhood), and "The Body of Christ" (e.g. members of Christ, spiritual body, head of cosmic spirits, the unity of Jews and Gentiles, the fulness of God). With keen and sympathetic insight the author manages to weave into one fascinating discussion the gist of an enormous number of Scriptural passages bearing on these topics.

Despite such an abundance of information,

it is surprising that Minear has overlooked a Pauline metaphor for the church which has played a most significant role in a large section of Christendom, namely the church as Mother (Gal. 4.26). Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage in the third century, was accustomed to say, "That one can have God as his Father, he must first have the church as his Mother" (*Ep.* 74, 7; *Unit. eccl.* 5). Echoing and elaborating this sentiment even Calvin declared of the church as mother: "There is no other way of entrance into life, unless we are conceived by her, born of her, nourished at her breast, and continually preserved under her care and government till we are divested of this mortal flesh, and 'become like the angels'" (*Inst.*, iv, i, 4).

Minear's work is more than a study of semantics. It is a valuable contribution toward a better understanding of the teaching of the New Testament regarding the nature of the Christian Church, and deserves to be widely read by both clergy and laity alike.

BRUCE M. METZGER

*New Testament Survey*, by Merrill C. Tenney. William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961. Pp. 464. \$5.95.

This is a revised, enlarged, and illustrated edition of Dr. Tenney's well-known *The New Testament: An Historical and Analytic Survey*, 1953. The revision incorporates new material such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, certain aspects of recent scholarship, and a chapter on the text and transmission of the New Testament. The book continues to be a useful source for factual information about the political, social, economic and religious world of the New Testament. The maps and illustrations are numerous and good.

The survey of the content of the New Testament books, which occupies the major portion of Dr. Tenney's work, is likewise filled with useful and reliable information. The outlines provided for the New Testament books are perhaps too skillfully devised. Their largely contrived nature reflects the basic approach of the survey which is more mechanical and descriptive than methodological. In keeping with the "inspiration school" the center of attention is

placed on the given written documents rather than on the history out of which the documents arose and of which they are an integral part. Thus the problem of history and the uniqueness of the historiography of the New Testament writers is not discussed in the depth required to challenge a modern student to think through the problems. One must acknowledge the balance and fairness with which the author discusses the questions raised by New Testament scholarship. Nevertheless, the impression is left that the book is written to convince the convinced.

JAMES P. MARTIN

*A Survey of the New Testament*, by W. W. Sloan. Philosophical Library, New York, N.Y., 1961. Pp. 302. \$4.75.

This book by the professor of Bible and religious education at Elon College, North Carolina, is designed as a textbook for college students. Each chapter is provided with supplementary reading, assignments, and questions for class discussion. Three pages of review assignments are given at the end of the book. The New Testament is surveyed according to a chronological arrangement of its documents from the life of Jesus to the latest writings (Jude and 2 Peter). About half the material in the book is given over to the gospels, and this in turn is focused upon the teaching of Jesus.

The author attempts to bring out the positive values in all the New Testament books. His negative judgments are frequently given in the form of rhetorical questions. The general point of view represented in this book is rational and liberal religion. Despite some allusions to J. B. Rhine's parapsychology, the interpretation of Jesus is reminiscent of eighteenth century rationalism. The definition of religion presupposed does not seem in touch with the depths of modern thought, not to mention the depths of the New Testament religion.

JAMES P. MARTIN

*Beginning Greek: A Functional Approach*, by Stephen W. Paine. Oxford University Press, New York, 1961. Pp. 325. \$5.75.

The merits of this grammar lie in part

in its novel features: First, it combines in one volume courses in both classical and *koine* Greek; and second, the method is inductive in that the author approaches Greek literature at the center throughout. The Gospel of John is used for *koine* Greek, and portions of Xenophon's *Anabasis* provide the readings for the classical.

In addition, this is a complete grammar, including adequate paradigms, explanations of difficult points and a good syntactical summary. The use of the inductive method meets a need in Greek pedagogy, yet the explanatory notes necessary to aid the beginning student show that this is not an easy method to apply to a language rich in inflections and syntactical constructions. However, this difficulty is partly offset by the relatively simple syntax of John's Gospel.

Although a student who knows either *koine* or classical Greek may on his own learn the other form by the use of this book, the structure of the book requires that the *koine* be taught first in an actual course of instruction. All the inflected forms are learned in the *koine* section, which is designed for the first semester of a one year course. The classical style and grammar is designed to follow in the second semester. Only experimental teaching will tell if the author's plan to introduce the verb in large units of conjugation works out well in the learning process. Since he himself has taught the language for years, however, there is reason to believe that his design of presenting *luo* as an entire verb rather than as a collection of fragments actually would be good pedagogical procedure.

An interesting question posed by this book is whether seminaries which normally teach only a year's course in *koine* Greek would do well to follow the author's plan and introduce students to the classical Greek as well.

JAMES P. MARTIN

*The Twentieth Century in Europe: The Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Churches* (Volume IV, Christianity in a Revolutionary Age, A History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries). Kenneth

Scott Latourette. Harper & Brothers, New York, N.Y. 1961. Pp. 543. \$8.50.

This is the fourth of the projected five-volume series in which Dr. Kenneth S. Latourette undertakes to survey the course of Christian history during the past century and a half. His first three volumes covered the nineteenth century. The present book deals with the story of Christianity in Europe since the opening of the twentieth century; the fifth and last installment will survey the fortunes of Christianity in America and the rest of the world, during this same period.

Dr. Latourette here deals with the three major branches of the Christian Church in the same order in which he treated them in his previous volumes, namely Roman Catholicism, then Protestantism, and then Eastern Orthodoxy. The common pattern which he discerns in connection with all three of them is that of challenge and response. Secularism, stemming from scientific discoveries and their practical applications, such anti-Christian ideologies as Marxist Communism, and the devastating wars which, beginning in 1914, have made the subsequent half century a "time of troubles," have posed a grave threat to Christianity and its churches in every country of Europe; and they undoubtedly have contributed to the de-Christianization of many of that continent's inhabitants. But in the face of this serious challenge, the Christian Churches—all three of them, but Roman Catholicism and Protestantism more than Eastern Orthodoxy—have shown commendable vigor and vitality, with laymen playing a key role. So Dr. Latourette's conclusion is this: "In the mid-twentieth century Christianity was far from being dominant in the life of mankind and was being stiffly challenged as in any era. But it was more widely influential than it or any other religion had ever been" (p. 13).

It goes without saying that this book is marked by the characteristics which readers of Dr. Latourette's previous works have come to expect from him—immense knowledge and command of details, but at the same time a lucidity of exposition and a gift of generalization which set the details in clear and proper perspective. His book will undoubtedly serve as a standard survey of

the position of Christianity in contemporary Europe.

NORMAN V. HOPE

*The Story of F. W. Boreham*, by T. Howard Crago. Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., London, 1961. Pp. 260. 20s.

*The Last Milestone*, by F. W. Boreham. The Epworth Press, London, 1961. Pp. 137. 9 s. 6 d.

For many years before his lamented death in 1959, Dr. F. W. Boreham—in spite of his unpromising name!—was one of the most widely circulated and most frequently quoted authors in the English-speaking religious world. His forty-eight volumes of essays sold to the number of over one million copies; and Dr. Daniel Lamont did not seriously exaggerate when, as Moderator of the Church of Scotland General Assembly in 1936, he introduced Dr. Boreham as “the man whose name is on all our lips, whose books are on all our shelves, and whose illustrations are in all our sermons.”

In 1940 Dr. Boreham published his autobiography under the title, “My Pilgrimage.” But though this is a fascinating book, which such a discriminating reader as Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead could hardly put down till he had finished it, Boreham was so modest and self-effacing that he left much unsaid. There was, therefore, room for an account of his life by a less inhibited biographer; and this book by Boreham’s friend, Dr. T. Howard Crago, adequately fills this need.

Mr. Crago’s book recounts the outward events of Boreham’s career—his going up from his native Tunbridge Wells in Kent to London as a teen-ager; his decision to follow Jesus Christ, and then to enter the Baptist ministry; his study at Spurgeon’s College; and his three pastorates beneath the Southern Cross, in Mosgiel, New Zealand; Hobart, Tasmania; and Armadale, a suburb of Melbourne, Australia; and his wider ministry of speech and pen throughout the English-speaking world. But this volume also unveils Boreham’s inner motivation, namely his deep love for Jesus Christ, the Lord of all good life, and his passionate

desire to bring others to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

Those who heard Boreham preach—as did the present reviewer on a memorable occasion—must have wondered at the secret of his pulpit power. This biography helps to answer this question. Of course, Boreham had a passion for souls, and always preached for verdicts. He had a memory like a cash register, which could put the fruits of his study at his instant command. For the rest, however, he had to work hard—in learning how to modulate his high-pitched voice and to slow down his rapid-fire delivery, in constant reading to fill his mind with ideas, and in incessant writing to prune and polish his literary style. That is to say, his pulpit mastery was even more a triumph of assiduous self-discipline than a gift of nature.

Any minister who feels discouraged concerning his work—and which minister doesn’t at times?—will be greatly heartened by the reading of this inspiring volume.

“The Last Milestone” is the title of the final collection of Dr. Boreham’s essays. It is prefaced by an appreciative biographical essay written by Dr. C. Irving Benson, of Wesley Methodist Church, Melbourne, another of Dr. Boreham’s Australian ministerial friends. Though the essays in this book are shorter in length and thinner in content than Boreham produced at his best, they nevertheless exemplify his many-sided interests, his love of biography, his literary grace, his power of apt quotation, and his ability to relate almost any subject to the great centralities of the Christian faith. It is to be hoped that readers of this book will go on to sample some of Boreham’s earlier and finer work.

NORMAN V. HOPE

*The Faith of John Knox*, by James S. McEwen. John Knox Press, Richmond, Va., 1962. Pp. 116. \$2.50

John Knox has been so closely identified with the carrying through of the Scottish Reformation—of which he was the chief architect and protagonist—that his theological thought has been neglected to the point of being virtually ignored. It has been assumed, without much discussion, that in matters of doctrine Knox was simply a car-

bon copy of John Calvin, his great mentor. This book by Dr. James S. McEwen—The Croall Lectures for 1960—examines Knox's theology at firsthand, and reaches the conclusion that, though he was a convinced and devoted follower of John Calvin in matters of churchmanship, he nevertheless was a theological thinker of independence and originality.

Of course, Knox was not a systematic theologian—in this respect resembling Luther rather than Calvin. His sermons were markedly effective when he delivered them from his Edinburgh pulpit of St. Giles; but he destroyed most of them before his death. Even so, however, enough of Knox's writings remain to enable Dr. McEwen to expound his thought on such central issues as the Bible, the Sacraments, Predestination and Providence. And from these sources Dr. McEwen cites ample evidence to prove his contention with respect to Knox's independence of viewpoint.

One reason for this deviation from strict Calvinism, Dr. McEwen suggests, is that Knox was influenced deeply not only by Paul, but also by the author of the Fourth Gospel. It was in John 17 that Knox "first cast his anchor"; and the thought of this Fourth Gospel so saturated his mind as to give a distinctive cast to his theological thinking.

It should be added that Dr. McEwen is no slavish hero worshipper of Knox. For instance, he asserts—what is surely true—that Knox failed to make a sufficiently clear distinction between the Old Testament and the New; and he also contends, with equal truth, that Knox made too sharp a distinction between the elect and the so-called reprobate, failing to realize that "the elect are elect for the sake of the non-elect." This book—a pioneer in its field of research—thus presents a lively and balanced picture of the religious thought of the man whom Thomas Carlyle once described as "the one Scotchman to whom, of all others, his country and the world owe a debt."

NORMAN V. HOPE

*Romanticism in American Theology, Nevin and Schaff at Mercersburg*, by James Hastings Nichols. The Uni-

versity of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1961. Pp. x + 322. \$7.50.

James Hastings Nichols sees history through the eyes of its protagonists, not from the irenic detachment of the balcony. The drama of Mercersburg Theology from 1840 to 1860 is thus unfolded as its heroes—John Williamson Nevin (1803-1886) and Philip Schaff (1819-1893), lived it. Financed by the Guggenheim Foundation, and lured by lectureships at Austin and Lancaster Seminaries, Professor Nichols ransacked primary materials from fourteen libraries to piece together this tale. The result is a major contribution to American religious history, a must for anyone who wants to understand nineteenth and twentieth century tensions within Protestantism.

Before arriving at Mercersburg both Nevin and Schaff had travelled far. Nevin's journey (Chaps. 1, 2) led from a revivalist conversion at Union College under Asahel Nettleton, through Princeton Seminary's orthodoxy and a period of moralism and legalism as editor of *The Friend* and a professor at Pittsburgh, into the Romantic world of feeling (Coleridge), historical development (Neander) and the Church (Newman). Once at Mercersburg F. A. Rausch's Hegelianism influenced him, and he began to attack "anxious bench" revivalism with its Arminianism and individualism, while expounding a catholic view of redemption marked by catechetical and churchly emphases.

Schaff's trip (Chap. 3) started with a pietistic training and conversion and included student days at Tübingen (Baur, Dörner and Moehler), Halle (Tholuck) and Berlin (Hengstenberg and Neander). While Privatdocent at Berlin he was impressed with Ludwig Gerlack's high-church views and the positive aims of the Prussian Union. These impressions were reinforced by visits with Pusey and Maurice on the way to America. Upon arrival at Mercersburg his intellectual baggage bulged with notions of historical development, the church as a social organism, a high view of the sacraments, sanctification and Christian unity. These ideas, combined with Nevin's, made up the "evangelical catholicism" with which they successfully undermined revival "Puritanism."

Their task was not easy for the German Reformed Church was not ready for a "sacramental revival." In teaching a Calvinistic sacramental doctrine (Chap. 4) of incorporation and union with the glorified and living humanity of the Second Adam, made possible by Christ's "spiritual real presence" in the eucharist, Nevin encountered the Zwinglian into which the denomination had withdrawn. Joseph Berg led the Philadelphia Classis to try Nevin on five counts of heresy (acquitted, 1845). In a sacramental debate with Charles Hodge, Nevin showed how far native American theology had departed from Reformation positions.

Schaff's view of historical development (Chap. 5) challenged all, Protestant and Roman, who contended that Christianity was a perfect and unimprovable system of divinely revealed truth. Unlike Newman, Schaff's use of the biological analogy allowed for the possibility of reform within a developmental process. He thus taught a continuity between Reformation and medieval Christianity. Three centuries of Protestant subjectivism had admittedly led to rationalism, sectarianism, political revolution and cultural irresponsibility. But Schaff looked forward optimistically to a new Hegelian synthesis in a more objective "evangelical catholicism." It would bring Christian unity without Romanism.

By making the Incarnation the organizing principle of his theology, Nevin gave a more organic twist to sin and redemption than did the view of mere legal and imputed guilt. His treatment of the Second Adam's conquest of sin and hell sounded like Aulen's *Christus Victor*, but was unfamiliar to contemporaries who waited in vain to hear more about substitutionary satisfaction. When Nevin made the church the historic continuation of the life of Christ, and the only means for his saving presence among men, he challenged Protestants for whom the Church had become a mere voluntary agency to be entered only through conversion.

Mercersburg's rehabilitation of tradition (Chap. 7) seemed like a Trojan horse inside Protestantism. The only conceivable alternative to *sola scriptura* for Protestants, who had allowed even the Apostle's Creed to fall into disuse, was Romanism. Nevin made Christ the final authority with the Bible

and creeds as secondary. The Church was to live by the Bible as interpreted "within the orbit of the creed." This, Nichols claims, was a "via media at a deeper level than Oxford," avoiding authoritarianism as well as individualism.

Partly due to financial difficulties, 1851 to 1854 were anxious years for Mercersburg, but more because of Nevin's "dizziness" with Anglo-Catholicism (Chaps. 8, 9). After resigning his posts at the school and expounding Cyprian to Rome's advantage there seemed every likelihood that he would follow Newman to the Vatican. But negative difficulties with Protestantism did not add up to a positive conversion to popery.

As champions of baptismal grace, Mercersburg theologians had to fight Baptist practices and predestinarian views within the denomination. In reasserting the "legitimate priestly aspects" of the ministry, whose apostolicity was validated by institutional genealogy, Nevin advocated the discipline of confession and absolution. As a committee man working for a new liturgy, Schaff proved more successful than Nevin. But neither was able to change the non-liturgical character of the congregations.

This volume is a worthy successor to Professor Nichols' widely read texts. By combining impressive research, sympathetic analysis and clear English he has produced a vivid and penetrating interpretation of an early encounter between Americanized Protestantism and critics speaking from European perspectives. The close parallelism between the issues described here and the present ecumenical encounter makes this story a mirror of our own times. Nichols' realistic exposition of theological issues in the context of biographical and cultural conflict and development makes for good history. His almost complete sympathy for evangelical catholicism and his winning accounts of Nevin and Schaff allow the reader to understand what would otherwise be inexplicable, namely, the consistent support which the denomination accorded strangers who were deliberately remaking it.

Reservations about this impressive book center more upon what Professor Nichols has not done than upon what he has done so well chapter by chapter. Biographically Schaff, who gets equal billing in the subtitle, never moves downstage with Nevin

into whose early years Nichols dug with brilliant results. By comparison Schaff's portrait is second-hand. Further, the excitement of the early chapters is frustrated when an expected encounter between the heroes at Mercersburg never takes place. The question of their personal interaction and mutual influence is not faced (perhaps because it cannot be documented) even when one is anxious to know why Schaff was never intoxicated with Nevin's dizziness and why Nevin himself did not succumb. The heroes are juxtaposed and then we proceed to the Austin Lectures.

By coincidence this volume appears when Schaff's *America* is being reissued with the claim that it is a major work of nineteenth century cultural history. How strange that Professor Nichols mentions it only once in passing! If titles are to be taken seriously (and one is at a loss to know how to treat this title since Romanticism, a tricky word at best, is not defined much less delimited), then one of the most Romantic elements in Schaff and contemporary German and English theologians, was their fascination with the meaning of nationality. The arbitrary exclusion of this facet of Schaff's concern is unfortunate. The impression which this volume conveys that Mercersburg's theologians had little more than disdain for things American in religion does not accurately reflect Schaff's positive interpretation of American nationality and its role in Church history. This aspect of Schaff may provide the clue for his relative optimism about Protestantism, and his immunity to Nevin's dizziness. By way of question it might be asked in light of this omission whether Schaff and Nevin do not appear entirely too modern in this work. In selecting items favorably modern has Nichols neglected things in the literature which are unfavorably but essentially Romantic?

JOHN EDWIN SMYLIE

*Paternalism and the Church: A Study of South Indian Church History*, by Michael Hollis. Oxford University Press, New York, 1962. Pp. 114. \$1.55.

Those who pick up this wise and intriguing study of church life in South India will be

well advised to persevere to the end, and to look at the whole in the light of its conclusions. Michael Hollis, until recently Bishop of Madras, of the Church of South India, is a penetrating critic of the mistakes of missionary policy and the dilemmas of a dependent church. The larger portion of the book is devoted to this criticism, and represents as incisive a treatment of the problem as this reviewer has found anywhere in missionary literature. At its heart lies the problem of power and prestige. Hollis shows in detail how easily the missionary, and following him the Indian church leader, slips into the position of high status already prepared by the hierarchical ideas of the non-Christian society. He analyzes the subtle influence of money in determining policy, and the exceeding difficulty of divorcing financial help from the power of its source, so that it may be truly used by the Holy Spirit for the good of the church.

But the most creative part of the book is that in which the author re-examines the structure of the church and its ministries, themselves. Here is where the new consciousness of the Christian community will arise, which can control paternalism. These ministries are based on the servanthood of Christ, first of all, out of which arises the ministry of every Christian, and of the whole Christian community. When this consciousness arises from below, out of the congregations, there will be spiritual counterforce to the false concepts of prestige and authority which now dominate the church. "In a real sense," says the Bishop, "we all need to start by being congregationalists." The superstructure of the church must then be that which is demanded by its service and mission to the world around it. The same is true of its ministries. They are flexible. Some of them should be for a certain time only, or for a certain congregation. There are times when the ministry of Word and Sacrament should be united with the ministry of pastoral care, and times when they should reside in different persons. The central reality is the one service of Christ to the world through its one body in each and every place. Christians would do well to ponder in all countries the revolutionary implications for church order and mission which this little book contains.

CHARLES C. WEST

*Religion in the Soviet Union*, by Walter Kolarz. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1961. Pp. 516. \$12.50.

This is an excellently balanced and well-informed book on its subject. Its first virtue is comprehensiveness; its second is a judicious, sympathetic approach to each religious group and to the vicissitudes of religious life in the Soviet Union as a whole. Only sixty of over five hundred pages are devoted to the Russian Orthodox Church itself. The rest tell the story of all the other churches and groups found within the limits of the Union, some large, like the Evangelical and Baptist Union, some diminutive sects, some national churches, such as the Armenians, some foreign importations of recent generations; the most of them Christian, but also chapters on the Jews, the Muslims, and the Buddhists. "My main concern," writes the author in his preface, "was to throw light on the less familiar aspects of the religious situation in the Soviet Union." This he has admirably done. Material is available here which otherwise would have to be sought in thousands of obscure articles and pamphlets in a dozen languages.

The sympathy and charity of the author are, however, as impressive as his breadth. The story of each group is told with restraint and with a sincere attempt to bring out, through the varying forms of conformity to the Communist "line" and resistance to it, and through the degrees of freedom, pressure and persecution each has suffered, what the author calls "the other Russia," the Russia of the believers. The outcome of this multifiform spiritual adventure, which came as a surprise to the author himself, is a qualified optimism about the future, based on the hope of an evolution in the Soviet consciousness, toward tolerance and peaceful competition between faith and atheism. This will not of itself produce a better situation for religion. The acids of secularization will still be at work. But it will provide the milieu in which the spiritual achievements of years of faith and witness against all odds, can bear fruit. The book closes with a challenge to the western believer to support with his prayer, and his clear Christian witness and thought in his own environment, the life of his co-religionist in the

Soviet Union. The polemicist will be disappointed. The book is an appeal to the patience, the endurance, and the hope and obedience of the saints.

The Christian reader in the West will inevitably read this book against a background which the writer, by a strange omission, does not mention. The Russian Orthodox Church has become a member of the World Council of Churches. This will open up ecumenical contact and dialogue, not only with Orthodoxy in Russia, but with many of the other churches as well. What will grow out of this new texture of ecumenical fellowship? This book gives no answers. It is a book of information, not of theological evaluation. But the attentive reader can discern signs therein which point to the future, and give the form of the hope with which this new relation is pregnant.

CHARLES C. WEST

*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*, by A. Leonard Griffith. Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tenn., 1961. Pp. 94. \$1.00.

It is difficult for some to know the Cross well enough in order to preach one adequate and effective sermon on it. To preach eight sermons of a consistently high order on this subject is, however, an unusual achievement. The minister of the City Temple, London, has made a careful study of the literature of the Cross—Biblical, theological, dramatic, and poetical—and has written a series of sermons reminiscent of R. W. Dale, James Moffatt, and Robert Law, in depth of thought and in power. He explores the far-reaching implications and the various aspects of the message of the Cross and under traditional subjects (its scandal, magnetism, judgment, triumph, glory, paradox, and challenge) he presents the timeliness of this inescapable fact for our generation. The thrust of his message appears clearly in his own words, "The Church will never recover its ancient power until we do pay heed to the New Testament and restore the Cross to its central place in our faith. . . . Pink-pill Christianity may appeal to semi-neurotics, but only Christianity capable of capturing the imagination and loyalty of intelligent, red-blooded men is Christianity

with the Cross at its heart and center." (pp. 63, 64). By his selection of great themes and through his intimacy with their basic meanings, Dr. Griffith brings a new lustre to preaching and restores some of that grandeur which the proclamation of the Word had lost in recent days and in less careful hands.

DONALD MACLEOD

*I Am Persuaded*, by David H. C. Read, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1961. Pp. 182. 14s.

Some of us had feared that "The Scholar as Preacher" Series had become another casualty of the decline in the market for published sermons. This would have been regrettable because in the twenty-nine volumes previously published, the research student in preaching had access to some of the finest preaching of the twentieth century. This new volume by David H. C. Read, minister of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, can claim justifiably a place in a series, already distinguished by such names as Macgregor, Inge, Gossip, Moffatt, Stewart, Mackintosh—to name a few.

In the course of twenty textual-topical sermons, Dr. Read reveals an unusual capacity for effective preaching. Here is preaching in depth, because he knows human nature, good literature, as well as having fine ability as a Biblical student and theologian. In not many instances today do we find so much competency in a single preacher. These are sermons to which men will not only listen; they can not help listening to them. If any preacher is dissatisfied with his own Sunday performance, he should read this volume in order to discover by comparison what his problem is.

DONALD MACLEOD

*Thine Is the Glory*, by Wyn Blair Sutphin. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1962. Pp. 121. \$3.00.

The author of this interesting book of sermons is an artist of unusual skill and devotion. He takes the eight clauses of the Lord's Prayer and interprets them with an

originality and insight that not only hold the reader but move him to admiration. These pages introduce us to a modern preacher who takes his pulpit responsibility seriously, despite the fact that his great church, First Presbyterian, Pompano Beach, Florida, crowds his life with demands that are legion. Dr. Sutphin shows wide reading, especially in the English classics—Shakespeare, Browning, Shaw, Lewis, Auden—and has a sensitive understanding of the need for religion in contemporary life. These sermons, moreover, from a lively mind that mints arresting phrases and constructs telling sentences. His oral style, which is never off-the-cuff or maudlin, speaks to us in clearly etched images and with good common sense, e.g., "You can't cramp courage into any category." "The flimsy wings of supposition." "If you are a Christian, you are in the red, and the account is written in the blood of Christ!" "When the moral ambulance comes screaming for the soul."

Young preachers especially should read these sermons. Homiletically they are a challenge. Spiritually they are a tonic for tired souls.

DONALD MACLEOD

*The Lord's Prayer—an Exposition*, by Walter Lüthi. John Knox Press, Richmond, Va., 1961. Pp. \$2.50.

This book contains a series of twelve sermons delivered by the author in 1946 at the Minster in Berne. He has published books on the Ten Commandments, Ecclesiastes, expositions of John's Gospel and the Epistle to the Romans, all originally preached as sermons. Together with Eduard Thurneysen, the well-known associate of Karl Barth, Lüthi edits the monthly "Basel Sermons" which have world-wide circulation. He is a preacher in the finest succession of Reformed prophets. We are told of his crowded congregations in Basel and Berne and we are left wondering if preaching so uncompromisingly Biblical as this would fill our churches in America. He makes the Word of God speak to man's condition and in his application and especially his illustrations which are mainly from personal experience, he is magnificent.

So many books have been written and

so many sermons preached on the Lord's Prayer that one wonders if anything new can be said about it. But in Lüthi we have a preacher who can bring the familiar words home to us with such power that we feel we are reading the Lord's Prayer for the first time. His style is simple, his outline clear, his divisions plainly stated and the subject-matter is always closely related to the contemporary situation. There is a rare depth and quality about these studies. To read them is a spiritual experience of the kind that makes the reader want to share with others what he has found.

Every phrase in the prayer is dealt with, including each word in the doxology, which is often omitted in studies of this prayer. There is a searching quality about this preaching which speaks directly to human need. This is a book to treasure.

JOHN BISHOP

*Preaching the Nativity*, ed. by Alton M. Motter. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1961. Pp. 136. \$1.95.

*Preaching the Resurrection*, ed. by Alton M. Motter. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1961. Pp. 186. \$2.25.

The first of these two paperback volumes contain nineteen sermons for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. Among the preachers selected, Lutherans predominate, the Methodists are worthily represented by Ralph W. Sockman and Gerald Kennedy, Harold Blake Walker is the sole Presbyterian. Seminary professors and church administrators as well as pastors of churches are among the contributors. The sermons which appealed most to this reviewer were Martin E. Marty's "The Gift of Repentance," William R. Snyder's "Christ, Cash and Christmas," and Harold Cooke Phillips' "The Wonder of Jesus." Some of the sermons have a theological approach, others are socially-oriented, while still others are of a devotional nature. The editor's hope is that a reading of these sermons will help Christians to discover the deep meaning of Christmas.

The second volume contains twenty-two sermons for Easter and surpasses its predecessor both in the quality of the preaching and in the greater variety of preachers

chosen to contribute. Bishop Pike is the only Episcopalian in either volume, Sockman and Bishop Kennedy again represent the Methodists, but they are joined by J. Wallace Hamilton, minister of Pasadena Community Church, St. Petersburg, Florida, who contributes an outstandingly original sermon, entitled "Out of this World," which looks at the Christian hope of immortality against the background of this space age. Princeton Seminary is worthily represented by E. G. Homrighausen and Paul Scherer. David Read, David MacLennan, and William H. Hudnut are Presbyterian contributors.

The sermons in both volumes are Bible-centered and most of them have illustrations that are striking and unhackneyed. A few of the sermons in the Easter volume are unusually long, and those particular ones are rather ponderous in tone and lacking in illustrative material. As is inevitable in a symposium of this kind, the sermons are unequal in quality and varied in style and construction. Nevertheless a judicious use of these two books should help the parish minister who finds it difficult year after year to discover new approaches to the familiar themes that must be dealt with at Christmas and Easter. The editor, now co-pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Denver, was formerly editor of the "Christian Century Pulpit" and director of Chicago's Sunday Evening Club. It is to be hoped that he will be sufficiently encouraged by the sale of these two volumes to compile a third, containing sermons for the other great festival in the Christian Year, which is so often neglected, Pentecost.

JOHN BISHOP

*Christ and Selfhood*, by Wayne E. Oates. Association Press, New York, 1961. Pp. 252. \$4.75.

This volume is addressed to a problem which is now ripe for exploration, and Professor Oates, as a long time leader in the field of pastoral theology who has also had a keen interest in doctrinal matters, has dealt with it in a suggestive and constructive way.

The work is actually more inclusive than the title suggests, as it includes not only the relation of selfhood (defined as "the habitual

center of focus of man's identity," p. 21) to Christology, but also its relation to the Christian doctrines of the Holy Spirit, the oneness of God, and the Trinity. Nevertheless well over half the book is devoted to the question of the decisive encounter of the self with Christ with the themes of incarnation, vocation, and resurrection being considered in some detail, and it is to this part of the work that I shall primarily address my remarks.

Oates defines the central purpose of the book as the exploration in detail of "the nature of the meeting of man by God in Christ and the ways in which the revelation of God in Christ is determinative of man's selfhood" (p. 36). The basic theme is that through encounter with Christ the broken selfhood of man is transformed into the whole self which was intended by God in creation, and given final meaning through the resurrection. Now this is certainly not a new idea as such, as it has also been a dominant one in the theology of crisis which has been so influential in recent Protestant thought. However, Oates brings many fresh insights to the meaning of this encounter in its various dimensions. Of the three conflicts in the broken self which Oates identifies—conflicts over man's personal and cultural background, conflicts over his ultimate concern in calling and vocation, and conflicts over the temporal and eternal dimensions of his destiny—it appears to this reviewer that Oates has dealt with greatest clarity and helpfulness with the second named, the conflict concerning one's vocation and its resolution. Here Oates would have us take with utmost seriousness the conflict that Jesus himself had over his own vocation, and its resolution through trial and struggle by means of his final identity

as the suffering servant. Here he finds the model whereby modern man, through encounter with him came to know himself and hold to that self-identity through a trust that led to the cross, can also find his own true vocation.

The latter chapters of the book, though they give evidence of the author's wide acquaintance with both the psychological and theological literatures which are pertinent to the various doctrines discussed, on the whole lack the cogency of the earlier ones, perhaps because the author tries to cover too much ground in too short a space.

Questions may also be raised about the Christological portions. For instance, we may wonder whether Oates overstates his case in insisting that one must "lay down" his social role if he is to achieve his true vocation (p. 101). Is it not rather the case that we must somehow live within social roles (though, to be sure, challenging them at points) and nevertheless express ourselves through authentic vocation? I must also ask whether the Aristotelian teleology implied in Oates' insistence that every man has a "primitively planned self" (p. 32) which he must struggle to actualize is really the best road to a Christian concept of selfhood, and whether we do God an injustice by insisting that he permits himself no risk of novelty in creation?

In spite of these and other questions which might be raised, I must hasten to add that I was greatly stimulated by this book to think relationally about matters of great import, and this is the real contribution to the life of the Church which needed to be made by a pioneer work such as this.

JAMES LAPSLEY

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